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THE

HOURS OF THE PASSION:

OR,

PATHETIC REFLECTIONS

ON THE

SUFFERINGS AND DEATH

OF

OUR BLESSED REDEEMER.

BY ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH
BY THE RIGHT REV. DR. WALSH,
BISHOP OF HALIFAX.

"Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—JOHN XV. 13.

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Archbishop of New-York

DEDICATION.

TO

JESUS CHRIST,

GOD AND MAN;

THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST OF FUTURE GOODS;

WHO LOVED US AND DELIVERED HIMSELF UP FOR US;

WHO WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR INIQUITIES,

AND BRUISED FOR OUR SINS;

WHO REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW.

WHO WHEN JOY WAS PROPOSED TO HIM,

UNDERWENT THE CROSS, DESPISING THE SHAME.

WHO AFTER HAVING FASTENED TO THE

CROSS

THE HAND-WRITING OF SIN THAT STOOD AGAINST US;

AND FOUND ETERNAL REDEMPTION;

ENTERED ONCE INTO THE HOLY PLACE BY HIS

OWN BLOOD,

WHERE HE ALWAYS LIVETH

TO MAKE INTERCESSION IN OUR BEHALF.

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A SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE OF ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI.

Alphonsus Maria de Liguori was born of a distinguished family at Marinella, near the city of Naples, on the 27th September, 1696. His father and mother were both of noble extraction; and his paternal uncle, Joseph Cavalieri, was Bishop of Troja, and had great reputation for piety. He received an excellent education, which was superintended during his childhood by his virtuous mother. She was most careful to instil maxims of piety into his tender mind, and to give him a love for regularity and truth in all his actions. She particularly taught him to entertain a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and a great zeal for the glory of God. His after life fully proved the value of these lessons, and shewed what deep root they had taken in his infant mind. He was yet very

young when the blessed Francis Jeronimo foretold that he would live to the age of ninety; that he would become an illustrious bishop, and render important services to religion. As he grew up, he was placed under the care of excellent masters; and applied himself with great success to the study of Greek and Latin, philosophy, and the civil and canon law. He had also a taste for drawing and music, and acquired some skill in each. He was well instructed in the principles of his religion, and punctual in the discharge of all its obligations. At all the public services of the church he was a regular attendant, and very frequently approached the holy communion.

After having succeeded to admiration in his studies, he embraced the profession of the law, at the age of sixteen. The purity of his morals, and his inviolate honour, united to his great talents and active mind, procured him universal esteem; and his parents justly flattered themselves, that he would attain the highest eminence and reputation in his profession. His success justified their hopes; it was equally honourable and rapid; and he

was advancing to the highest degree of professional distinction, when he suddenly resolved to abandon all his temporal prospects, and to devote himself to the service of God in the ecclesiastical state.

At first he met with many obstacles. His family, his friends, and even some of the most distinguished members of the Neapolitan government strenuously opposed his design; but he was not to be moved. However, in order that he should not undertake so important an affair without due consideration, he seriously reflected upon it for a long time in solitude; and, in order to ascertain the will of heaven, he made a spiritual retreat. Feeling himself encouraged from above to prosecute his design, he took the clerical habit, 31st August, 1722, and from that time his greatest delight was to be found in the church, at the hospital, and in the practice of the rudest austerities.

He received the tonsure on the 23d of September, 1724; and placed himself under certain holy priests, who laboured in country missions, and formed young ecclesiastics for the zealous discharge of missionary duties.

He received the holy order of priesthood in 1726, and at once commenced his apostolic career. His time was divided between the confessional and the pulpit; and his labours were crowned with abundant fruit. Whenever he gave a mission, great crowds were attracted by the reputation of his sanctity, and his hearers testified by sighs and tears the wonderful effects of his preaching.

Perceiving the great utility of the missionary labours in which he and his zealous companions were engaged, and anxious to impart the truths of salvation to the country people, whose ignorance he lamented, he resolved to found an order of apostolic missionaries, who should spread themselves over the adjoining territories, and preach the truths and duties of the gospel. For this purpose, on the 8th of November, 1732, he laid the foundation of his institute, under the title of *The Congregation of our most Holy Redeemer*, at Scala, in the district of Benevento. The rules and observances were nearly the same as those of the order founded in France, by St. Vincent of Paul, in the preceding century. At first, the number of his associates was small,

but their lives were so edifying and useful, that their number rapidly increased, and in 1742, they began to make simple or private vows. By these, they obliged themselves to obey the superior of the order, and they elected Liguori to that office. These holy missionaries distinguished themselves by so much zeal, activity and prudence, that applications for them were made from every quarter of Italy, and in spite of many contradictions the new society was solemnly approved by a rescript of Benedict XIV. on the 25th of February, 1749.

The difficult task of governing a numerous community of persons of different ages and dispositions, was discharged by Liguori with great prudence and zeal, and in a manner, which produced the happiest results, both to the community and the public. He recommended to those under his care prompt and entire obedience, and the most perfect humility, and he enforced his instructions by his example. He frequently employed himself in subordinate, and even menial offices, under the directions of the superiors of the different departments of the society. He

particularly inculcated a strict observance of evangelical poverty, and took care that the spirit of poverty should pervade every part of the college of his congregation. He was very attentive to the sick, and was wont to say, "that no members are so useful to a congregation as the sick and infirm, as none more feelingly invite the other members to a frequent and heroic exertion of virtue, or draw down upon them greater blessings from heaven."

He inculcated to the members of his congregation a strict attention to charity, both amongst themselves, and in respect to others. "The world," he used to observe, "is never so much scandalized as when they see a priest neglect this duty." His conduct proved how deeply he felt the truth of this observation. He was slow in judging unfavorably of others; when their failings or offences admitted no doubt, and called for his reproof, the language in which he expressed it, was rather that of admonition than of censure; a harsh or sarcastic expression never fell from his lips. His exertion to serve his neighbor, both in his spiritual

and temporal wants were boundless; throughout his long life he seemed to live entirely for others.

But while he was thus attentive to his neighbor, he did not forget his own sanctification. Having chosen what the author of the *Imitation of Christ* calls the Royal Road of the Cross, he walked in it to the end of his mortal course with a fervor that never cooled, and a perseverance that never faltered. He spent a considerable portion of his time every day in prayer and meditation on the mysteries of faith. He particularly dwelt on the life and death of Christ, and had the most tender devotion to Jesus present in the Holy Eucharist, and to his Sacred Heart. It pleased the Almighty to call him to the sublimest heights of holy contemplation, but they had been preceded by vigorous and unceasing efforts to purify his heart from every irregular affection, by long prayer and continual austerities.

The fame of his virtues induced many dioceses in Italy to desire him for their pastor, and several bishoprics were proposed to him, which he uniformly rejected. At length Pope

Clement XIII. named him Bishop of St. Agatha of the Goths, a suffragan see of the archbishopric of Benevento. He used every effort to decline the charge, and an express command from his holiness alone induced him to accept the mitre. He was consecrated on the 12th of June, 1762, and on the 11th of July in the same year, took possession of his see. He immediately gave missions in every part of his diocese, and considerably increased the number of the members of his congregation. He made frequent pastoral visits of the whole of his diocese, instructed and catechised the ignorant, established parishes, enforced the regularity of his clergy, and practised every other episcopal duty. Although poor, abstemious, mortified and austere, as far as himself was concerned, he was most kind to all others, and particularly charitable to the poor. In the famine which afflicted Naples in 1764, he sold every thing that belonged to him, including his plate, the buckles of his shoes, his ring and pectoral cross, and distributed the produce among the poor.

He never lost a moment of his precious time, and hence found leisure in the midst of

all his employment to compose a multitude of works on dogmatic and moral theology and piety. The number of his writings amounts to one hundred or upwards, all of which, after the most rigorous examination, were solemnly approved of by the sacred congregation of Rites, whose sentence was confirmed by Pius VII. in 1803.

Such was the sanctity of this great servant of God, that his confessor declared, he had not only preserved his baptismal innocence, but even that he had never, *deliberately*, committed a venial sin. 'That which most of all contributed to preserve his innocence,' says one of his biographers, 'was his tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, to whom he was specially consecrated.' Filled with love for, and confidence in Mary, he addressed himself to her in all his wants, and felt quite assured of obtaining all he asked, through her intercession. We may compare him to St. Bernard, by the sweetness of his expressions, and the abundance of his sentiments in celebrating Mary's greatness, by word and writing. Whenever he preached in her honor, his auditory was most numerous; the most obstinate were con-

verted; and he was often seen so transported by his subject, as to be raised in ecstacy from the earth.

He petitioned Clement XIV. for permission to resign his diocese, but though he alleged declining health as his motive, his holiness lent an unwilling ear to the petition. He was more successful with Pius VI. who with great unwillingness acceded to his request. He therefore resigned his see in 1775, and without even the usual reservation of a pension, retired to a house of his order, at Nocera de Pagani, and commenced his long and fervent preparation for eternity.

At the age of eighty-five his infirmities confined him first to his room, and afterwards to his bed. In this state he received every day the Holy Communion, and gave spiritual advice to those who resorted to him. With the exception of these employments he devoted his whole time to meditation and prayer. On the 1st of August, 1787, after a long life spent in the practice of every virtue, he committed his soul into the hands of his Redeemer, in the ninety-first year of his age.

The nobility and gentry of his diocese, and

the adjoining parts of Italy, popes, cardinals, bishops, princes, and magistrates, expressed the highest opinion of his eminent virtues, both during his life and after his decease. Hence the most urgent appeals were made to Pius VI. to commence the process of his canonization: and the first steps towards that purpose were taken within a year after the saint's death. The Holy Father in his Brief for commencing the proceedings said, that he loved Liguori during life, and observed in him the most extraordinary piety and devotion.

After the approval of his works, succeeded the examination of the virtues of Liguori. The proofs were so satisfactory, that the Pope dispensed with the Bull of Urban VIII. which forbade this special scrutiny to be made until fifty years after death. The cardinals were unanimous in declaring that the virtues of the deceased had attained the heroic degree, and their decision was confirmed by the pope on the 7th of May, 1807.

On the 6th of September, 1816, Pope Pius VII. promulgated the Bull of his Beatification, the process of which declares, that more than one hundred miracles were performed by the

saint during his life, and twenty-eight after death.

Pope Leo XII. on the 19th of February, 1825, addressed a Brief to the editor of the works of Liguori, which was accompanied by a golden medal. All his writings, and particularly his moral theology, are in the highest repute at Rome.

At length the Brief for his canonization was published by his late holiness Pope Pius VIII. on the 11th of May, 1830, in the forty-third year after his death.

St. Francis of Sales observes that when St. Bonaventure poured out the effusions of his soul, he seemed to have no other paper than the cross; no other pen than the lance; and no ink, save the precious blood of Christ. An attentive perusal of the following work of St. Alphonsus will justify the application of the same sentiment to him. *The Hours of the Passion* seem to have been composed on Calvary, at the very foot of the cross; and to have been written in the still warm blood of our Divine Redeemer. It is one of those works which the faith of the saints could alone suggest to their charity. The holy author breathes

nothing throughout but tenderness, unction, and love. We are astonished and delighted at his freedom of speech, and that heavenly familiarity with which he communes with his suffering Redeemer, the object of all his affections. His loving heart fondly dwells on every circumstance, how minute soever in the tragic history of the Passion, and makes it serve as a new motive to challenge the gratitude of mankind. Hence the book is, in reality, as well as in name, *Hours of the Passion.* He has marked in it, one by one, the hours of this tedious agony, during which all the oracles of the Prophets were fulfilled—all the precious blood of Christ poured out, drop by drop, and all that bitter chalice which contained the death of the man God, and the life of the human race, drained even to the very dregs.

As this invaluable work has been highly prized on the continent, the Translator hoped that he would render an acceptable service by its publication in English.
Conceiving, that no topic of religious meditation would be more generally useful, than considerations of the love of God, manifested in his Passion and Death, he has long lamented

the want of a cheap and suitable manual of meditation on this interesting subject, which might be put into the hands of the poorer faithful, and speak to them in that touching language of the heart with which they are best acquainted, of that extraordinary and unheard of love of their Redeemer, with which 'he loved them to the end' of his life. He flatters himself, that this deficiency may be supplied by the following translation, in which he has principally endeavored to convey the literal meaning of the holy author, and to preserve that affecting simplicity which lends so many charms to the original. In the American edition, the various Latin quotations have been omitted. The literal translation of these quotations, or the substance of them, has been thought sufficient for the general reader.

THE

HOURS OF THE PASSION.

INVOCATION TO JESUS AND MARY.

O Saviour of the world! O lover of souls! O Lord! the most worthy object of our sympathies, you have come to gain our hearts by your passion, in which you have displayed the immense love that you bore us by consummating the work of a redemption, which has been for us an ocean of benedictions, whilst it has been to you an ocean of ignominies and sorrows! Your principal object in instituting the Holy Sacrament of the Altar was to perpetuate the remembrance of your passion. 'In order that we should have a lively and constant recollection of so great a benefit,' says St. Thomas, 'he has left his body for the nourishment of the faithful.' (Opusc. 57.) And long before

him St. Paul had said, 'As often as you shall eat this bread, you shall shew forth the death of the Lord.' (1 Cor. ii.) By so many prodigies of love, you have already taken possession of so many souls in such a manner, that being consumed by the flames of your love, they have renounced all earthly good, in order to consecrate themselves entirely to you alone, O most amiable of Masters! Oh! grant then, O my Jesus! that I may always remember your Passion; and, that I, so miserable a sinner, being at length overcome by such an excess of love, may be incited to love you, and to give you from my poor heart some proofs of gratitude for the exceeding love you have displayed towards me, my God, and my Saviour! Remember, O my Jesus! that I am one of those tender sheep for whose salvation you came upon the earth to sacrifice your divine life. I know, that after having redeemed me by your death, you do not cease to love me, and that even now you have the same love for me which you had when you died

for my sake Suffer me not to live any longer ungrateful to you, my God! who are so worthy of being loved, and who have done so much, in order to gain my love.

And you, O most holy Virgin Mary! who had so great a share in the Passion of your Son, ah! through the merits of your sufferings obtain for me the grace of experiencing some of that compassion which wounded your soul at the death of Jesus, and a spark of that love which caused the entire martyrdom of your heart.

'I beseech you, Lord Jesus! that the force of your love, which is more ardent than fire, and sweeter than honey, may absorb my soul, in order that I may die for the love of your love, who died for the love of my love.' (*Prayer of St. Francis of Assisium.*)

THE UTILITY OF MEDITATING ON THE PASSION OF CHRIST.

1. The lover of souls, our most amiable Redeemer has declared, that he had no other object in coming to earth to assume our nature, than to enkindle in all hearts the fire of his holy love. '*I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?*' (Luke xxii. 49.) What beautiful flames of love has he not lit up in a number of souls, particularly by the sufferings which he wished to endure even unto death, in order to shew the immensity of his love for us! O how many hearts are blessed in the wounds of Jesus, which, like glowing furnaces, are so penetrated with the fire of his love, that they have not refused to consecrate to him their goods, their lives, their entire selves, surmounting with a generous courage all the obstructions they meet in the observance of the divine law, for the love

of that Master, who although a God, would suffer so much for the love of them.

Such is likewise the advice which the Apostle gives us. He exhorts us, not only not to fail, but even to run with speed in the way of heaven. '*Think diligently upon him who endured such opposition from sinners against himself, that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds.*' (Heb. xii. 3.)

2. It was for this reason that St. Augustine, in the transports of his love, standing in the presence of Jesus covered with wounds, and fastened to the cross, poured forth his tender prayer. 'Write,' said he, 'my most amiable Saviour, write all your wounds on my heart, that I may therein read your grief and love: your grief, in order that I may endure all grief for your sake: your love, in order that through love of you I may renounce all other love.'

3. And where did the saints find the courage and constancy that enabled them to suffer tortures, martyrdom and death, unless in the wounds of Jesus crucified? St.

Joseph of Liens, a Capuchine, seeing that they were about to bind him with cords for a painful operation that was to be performed on him by a surgeon, took his crucifix in his hands and cried out, 'What necessity is there for cords? Ah! behold the cords that bind me—my Saviour pierced with nails for the love of me. It is he, who binds me by his sufferings, and enables me to endure all manner of pain for his love.' During the operation, not a murmur escaped him, as he continued looking on Jesus, who, like a tender lamb, under the hands of the shearer, '*was silent and opened not his mouth.*' (Isaias liii. 5.) Who can ever say that he suffers unjustly, if he beholds Jesus, who '*was bruised for our iniquities.*' Isaias xvi.) Who can ever excuse himself for want of obedience, under the pretext of inconvenience, when Jesus has been '*made obedient even unto death!*' (Philipp. ii.) Who can refuse to suffer indignities, when he sees Jesus treated as a fool, as a mock-king, as

a malefactor, ridiculed, covered with spittle, and fastened to an infamous gibbet?

4. Who can henceforth love any other object but Jesus, when he beholds him expiring amidst so much suffering and contempt, in order to captivate our affections? A pious solitary once implored God to teach him how to arrive at perfect love. The Lord revealed to him, that nothing was more useful for this purpose than frequent meditation on the Passion. Saint Teresa complained bitterly of certain books, in which she was recommended to relinquish her meditations on the Passion, as if they were an obstacle to the contemplation of the Divinity. 'O Lord of my soul!' said she, 'O my God, my crucified Jesus! I cannot think of this opinion without believing myself guilty of great infidelity. Is it possible, that you, O Lord! should be an obstacle to some greater good? Ah! whence has all good come to me but from you?'

5. In accordance with this sentiment the

blessed Balthazar Alvarez said, that ignorance of the treasures which we possess in Jesus was the cause of the ruin of Christians. Hence, the favorite and most ordinary subject of his meditations was the Passion of Jesus Christ. He dwelt particularly on these three great sufferings of our Lord—his poverty, his humiliations, his agonies. He recommended his penitents to meditate frequently on the Passion of our Saviour, and would tell them, not to imagine they had made any progress, unless they arrived at a state in which they should always have Jesus crucified written in their hearts.

6. 'Whosoever wishes,' says St. Bonaventure, 'to increase always in virtue and grace, should meditate without ceasing on the Passion of Jesus.' And he adds, that nothing conduces more to sanctify a soul than a frequent consideration of the sufferings of Christ.

7. Nay, more, St. Augustine (quoted by *Bernard de Bustis*) said, that one tear shed at the remembrance of the Passion of Jesus,

is better than a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and a year of fasting on bread and water. Indeed, our amiable Saviour endured so much, only to make us think of his sufferings, because it is impossible to think of them and not be inflamed with divine love. 'The charity of Christ presses us,' says St. Paul. (2. Cor. v.) Jesus is loved by so small a number, because only a few consider the torments he has endured for us. But he who considers them frequently cannot exist without loving Jesus. 'The charity of Christ presses us.' He will feel himself so pressed by his love, that he cannot refuse to love so loving a God, a God, who has suffered so much, in order to be loved.

8. Hence, the Apostle said, that he 'wished not to know any thing but Jesus, and Jesus crucified:' that is, the love which he has displayed for us on the cross. (1 Cor. ii. 2.) And in truth, what books can teach us the science of the saints, which is the science of loving God, better than the cross

of Jesus? The great servant of God, Brother Bernard of Corlien, a Capuchine, did not know how to read, and his fellow religious wished to teach him. He went to ask advice from the crucifix, and Jesus answered him from the cross: 'What necessity for books or reading! I am your Book, a Book in which you can always read the love I have had for you.' O! the great subject for meditation during life and during all Eternity! A God dying for love of us! A God dying for love of us! O the grand subject!

9. Whilst St. Thomas of Aquin was one day paying a visit to St. Bonaventure, he asked him from what book he derived the beautiful sentiments that were to be found in his writings. St. Bonaventure shewed him a crucifix, which was tarnished with his kisses, and said; 'Behold the book in which I have received all my knowledge; from this I learned the little that I know.' All the saints, without exception, have learned the love of God from the study of

the crucifix. Brother John of Avernia, could not refrain from weeping every time he cast his eyes on Jesus covered with wounds. Brother James of Tudertom, whenever the Passion of our Saviour was read, not only shed warm tears, but also issued deep groanings, being overcome by the love which burned in him for his tender Master.

10. It was in the sweet school of the crucifix that St. Francis became a seraph on earth. Whenever he meditated on the sufferings of Jesus Christ, he wept so constantly, that he nearly lost his sight. One day a person heard him utter the most plaintive cries, and asked him what was the matter. 'What is the matter,' said he, 'I am weeping over the sufferings and affronts of my Saviour, and my grief is increased when I think of the ingratitude of men who never love him, and who live without thinking of him?' Every time he heard a lamb bleat he melted into tears at the remembrance of Jesus, the lamb without spot, who was immolated for the sins of the world.

And being all inflamed with love, this holy man could recommend nothing so impressively to his brethren as the frequent remembrance of the Passion of Christ.

11. Jesus crucified is then the book in which we should often read ourselves. We learn both to fear sin and to burn with love for so loving a God—for we read in his wounds both the malice of sin, which condemned a God to suffer so cruel a death, in order to satisfy the divine justice, and the love which the Lord manifested in our regard, in wishing to suffer so much, that he might make us comprehend the extent of his love.

12. Let us beseech the holy Mary to obtain for us, from her Son, the grace to enter into those furnaces of love, in which so many hearts burn; in order, that by destroying there all our earthly affections, we may also burn in those happy flames, which render souls holy on earth, and blessed in heaven. Amen.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE LOVE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS DISPLAYED FOR US, BY WISHING THAT HIMSELF SHOULD SATISFY THE DIVINE JUSTICE FOR OUR SINS.

1. History relates an instance of a love, so wonderful, that it will be the admiration of all ages. A king, the ruler of many kingdoms, had an only son, who was so beautiful, so holy, and so amiable, that he was the delight of his father, who loved him as he loved himself. Now this young prince had a great affection for one of his slaves; and this slave having committed a crime, for which he was condemned to death, the prince offered to die in his place. His father, jealous of the rights of justice, agreed to condemn his dear son to death, in order that his slave should be delivered from the punishment which he had deserved. The sentence was carried into execution; the son died on a scaffold, and the slave was set free.

2. This rare instance of love, which was, and will be without a parallel in the world, is recounted in the gospel. We there read that the Son of God, the master of the universe, seeing man condemned to eternal death on account of his sin, wished to assume human nature, and to undergo, by suffering death, the punishment due to man. 'He was offered, because he willed it.' (Isaias liii.) And the Eternal Father condemned him to die on a cross, in order to save us, miserable sinners. 'He did not spare his own son, but delivered him up for us all.' (Rom. ix. 32.) O devout soul! what do you think of this love of the Son and of the Father?

3. Thus, O my lovely Redeemer! your death has been the sacrifice which you wished to offer to obtain my pardon! And what grateful return shall I make you? You have obliged me under so many titles to love you, that I will be most ungrateful if I do not love you with my whole heart. You have given me your divine life. Miser-

able sinner as I am, I give you mine. Yes, I wish to spend the remainder of my life only in loving you, in serving you, and endeavoring to please you.

4. O men! O men! let us love this Redeemer, who, although God, did not disdain to take upon him the burthen of our sins, that he might deliver us by his sufferings from the chastisements which we have deserved. 'Truly he hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows.' (Isaias liii. 4.) St. Augustine says, that God created us by his power, but that he redeemed us by his sufferings. O Jesus, my Saviour! how greatly am I not indebted to you. If I should shed my blood, and sacrifice my life a thousand times for you, it would be all too little. Oh! how can any one who thinks often on the love you have shewn us in your Passion love any thing but you? Ah! I beseech you, by that love with which you have loved me on the cross, to grant me the grace of loving you with my whole heart! I do love you, O infinite goodness! I love

you above all things, and I ask for nothing but your holy love.

5. But how explain this? says the same St. Augustine; how could your love, O Saviour of the world! reach to such a height, that you should suffer the punishment instead of me, who committed the crime? Of what consequence would it have been to you, adds St. Bernard, if we had been lost, if we had been punished as we deserved? Why would you wish to suffer in your innocent flesh the punishment of our sins, in order to deliver us from death? And why, O Lord! would you die? O miracle, the like of which was never seen, and will be never known! O grace, which we could never merit! O love, which we can never comprehend!

6. Isaias had foretold, that our Redeemer would be condemned to death, and 'led like a lamb to the slaughter.' (Isaias liii.) What a subject of astonishment must it not have been to the Angels, to behold their innocent Lord, led out like a victim to be sacrificed

on the altar of the cross for the love of man! And with what awe must not both heaven and hell have witnessed a God, punished as a malefactor on an infamous gibbet, for the sins of his creatures!

7. 'Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written '*Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree;* that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Christ Jesus:' (Gal. iii. 13.) upon which St. Ambrose says; 'He wished to be cursed on the cross, in order that you might be blessed in the kingdom of God.' (Epist. xlvii.) Thus, O my dear Saviour! in order to obtain the divine blessing for me, you consented to devote yourself to the public ignominy of the cross, accursed in the eyes of the world, and abandoned even in your torments by your Eternal Father, which dereliction was a new torment which made you utter this loud cry: 'My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me.' Mat. xxvii. 46.) Yes, according to the

commentary of Simon of Cassia, Jesus was abandoned in the midst of his torments, in order that we might not be abandoned in our sins. O prodigy of mercy! O exceeding love of a God for a man! Is it possible, O my Jesus! that a soul can be found who believes this, and loves you not?

8. 'He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood.' (Apoc. i. 5.) Behold then, O man! how far the love of Jesus for us has extended—even to the purification of our souls from the filth of sin. He wished to prepare us a bath of salvation in his own blood. He has offered up 'a blood that speaketh better than that of Abel.' The blood of Abel cried out for justice, that of Jesus for mercy. But cries out St. Bonaventure, 'O good Jesus! what have you done? Whither has your love carried you? What have you seen in me, that could inspire you with such love for me? Why would you suffer so much for me? Who am I, that you should wish to purchase my love at so great a price?

Ah! I perceive it: all has been the effect of your infinite love. May it be blessed and praised for ever and ever!

9. 'O! all you that pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.' (Lament. i. 2.) The seraphic doctor, considering these words of Jeremiah as spoken by the Saviour whilst he was dying on the cross for the love of us, cried out: 'Ah Lord! I will rather attend and see if there be any *love* like unto *your love!*' As if he had said, I behold, I understand already, O my most amiable Master! How much sorrow you have tasted on this infamous tree; but that which most powerfully incites me to love you, is to see the goodness you display in suffering so much, in order to gain my love.

10. The love of St. Paul for Jesus was principally enkindled at the thought, that he died, not only for all men in general, but for himself in particular. 'He loved me and delivered himself up for me.' (Gal. ii. 25.) Each one of us may say the same; for

St. Chrysostom assures us, that God loves each one in particular, as much as he loves the entire world. Thus, each of us is under no less obligations to Jesus Christ for having suffered for all mankind, than if he had suffered for ourselves in particular. Now, my brother, if Jesus had died for you alone, and left all others in original sin, how great would not be the extent of your obligations to him? Nevertheless, you ought to know, that you owe him a greater obligation for having died for all men, than if he had died for you alone. If he had died for you alone, how would you not be grieved to reflect, that your neighbors, your father and mother, your brethren and friends, should perish for ever, and that after this life you should be eternally separated from them? If you had been carried into slavery with all your family, and that some one came to redeem you alone, would you not earnestly entreat him to redeem also your parents and your brethren? And how grateful would you

not be, if he acceded to your request? Say then to Jesus: Ah, my sweet Saviour! you have done all this for me without being asked; you have at the expense of your blood, rescued not only me from death, but also my parents and my friends; so that I have reason to hope we may again be reunited, and enjoy you for ever in heaven. Lord! I love you; and I thank you; and I hope to do so for ever in that blessed country.

11. Who then, says St. Laurence Justinian, can explain the love which the Divine Word had for each of us, for this love surpasses that of a son for his mother, and that of a mother for her son? This love is such, that our Saviour revealed to St. Gertrude, that he would be ready to die as many times as there are damned souls, if they were still capable of being redeemed. O Jesus! O good! more lovely than every other good! why do men love you so little? Ah! make them know how much you have suffered for each one of them; make them

know how much you love them; how you desire to be loved by them; and the glorious titles which you have to their love. Make them know you, O my Jesus! make them love you!

12. 'I am the Good Shepherd,' says Jesus, 'the Good Shepherd gives his life for his sheep.' (John x. 2.) But where, O Lord! shall we find in the world shepherds like you? Other shepherds give death to their sheep, in order to preserve their own life. You, O too loving Shepherd? you wished to give your own life for your beloved sheep. And, ineffable goodness! O my most amiable Shepherd! I, even I, am one of those sheep. Oh! then how am I not obliged to love you, and to spend my life in your service, since you have died for the love of me in particular? And what confidence should I not have in your precious blood, knowing that it has been shed to pay my debts? 'And thou shalt say in that day: I will confess to thee, O Lord! behold God my Saviour. I will act con-

fidently, and will not fear.' (Isaias xii. 1.) How can I henceforth lose confidence in your mercy, O my Redeemer! when I look at your wounds? Let us go then, sinners, let us hasten to Jesus, who, on the cross, as if in a mercy-seat, has appeased the divine justice that was irritated against us. If we have offended God, he has done penance for us: all that is wanted is our own sincere repentance.

13. Ah, my good Saviour! to what a state have you been reduced by your compassion and love for me! The slave transgresses, and you, O Lord! you suffer the punishment of his offence. If, therefore, I think of my sins, I ought to tremble at the chastisements I deserve. But, when I think of your death, I have more reason to hope than to fear. Ah, blood of Jesus! you are all my hope!

14. But whilst this blood inspires us with all confidence, it obliges us also, to be entirely devoted to our Saviour. 'Know you not,' says the Apostle, 'that you are not

your own, for you have been bought with a great price?' (1 Cor. ix. 20.) No, my Jesus! I can no longer dispose of myself, or of any thing that belongs to me, without injustice. I have become your property since you have redeemed me by your death. My body, my soul, my life, belong to me no longer, they are all yours, and entirely yours. In you alone then I wish to die; you alone, O my God! who were crucified and put to death for me, I wish to love! I have nothing to offer you but this soul, that was redeemed by your blood. This I offer you. Permit me to love you, because I desire nothing but you, my Saviour, my God, my Love, my All! Hitherto I have been grateful towards men, and ungrateful only to you. Now I love you, and nothing grieves me more than that I have offended you. O my Jesus! give me confidence in your Passion, and extinguish in my heart every affection but the love of you. I do not wish to love any thing but you, who

have deserved all my love, and obliged me to love you under so many titles.

15. And who can henceforth be prevented from loving you, when he sees you the well-beloved of the Eternal Father, voluntarily ending your life for us, by so bitter and cruel a death! O Mary! O Mother of beautiful love! oh, obtain for us, by the merits of your heart all inflamed with love, that we may live only to love your Son, who, although in himself worthy of infinite love, wished to gain the love of a miserable sinner, like me, at so great a price. O Love of souls! O my Jesus! I love you, I love you. I love you, but I love you too little. Grant me yourself a greater love, and more lively ardors, that I may always live burning with your love. I do not deserve it; but you, you infinite goodness, you well deserve it. Amen. Amen. Amen.

CHAPTER II.

JESUS WISHED TO SUFFER MUCH FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT MAKE US UNDERSTAND THE GREATNESS OF HIS LOVE FOR US.

1. A FRIEND is known, says Cicero, by two things: by rendering good offices to his friend, and by suffering for him, which is the greatest proof of true love. God had already displayed his love for man, by loading him with so many favors. But, says St. Peter Chrysologus, this was too little for his love; he wished to shew him how much he loved him by suffering and dying for his sake. And how could God more fully display the immense love that he bore us, than by assuming our nature, and suffering for us, says St. Gregory Nazianzen. O my dearly-beloved Jesus! you have too fully proved your tenderness for me, and your desire to inflame me with the love of your goodness. Too great then would be the injury I should inflict upon you, if I

should love you too little, or love any thing but you.

2. Ah! surely, a God, exhibiting himself to us covered with wounds, crucified and dying for us, affords us the greatest proof of his love, says Cornelius a Lapide, (on 1st Corinth.) And St. Bernard said before him, that Jesus has convinced us by his Passion, that his love could not be greater for us than it really was. (De Pass. c. 41.) The Apostle writes, that it was when Jesus wished to die for our salvation, that the love of God for us, his miserable creatures, was displayed. 'The benignity and humanity of God our Saviour hath appeared.' (Titus iii.) Ah! I understand my amiable Master! all your wounds speak to me of your love for me. And who, after so many proofs of your love, can refuse to love you? St. Teresa had good reason to say: 'O my all amiable Jesus! he who does not love you, proves that he knows you not.'

3. Jesus Christ could effectually save us without suffering, and he might have led on

earth a peaceful and happy life. But no; St. Paul says: 'having joy proposed unto him, he underwent the cross.' (Heb. xii. 2.) He despised riches, pleasures, and earthly dignities; and he chose a life full of poverty, and a death full of ignominy and sorrow. And for what reason? Why did he do so? Was it not enough for him to ask his eternal Father for the forgiveness of man, by a simple prayer, which, being of infinite value, would be sufficient to save the world, nay, infinite worlds? And why then did he prefer so many dolours, and a death so cruel, that as an author justly observed, it was pure grief that separated his soul from his body? For what purpose did he save man, at so great a cost? St. John Chrysostom answers, that what was sufficient to save us, was not sufficient to shew the love that he bore us. This is confirmed by St. Thomas, who says, that Christ suffering from charity, offered a greater satisfaction to God than the sin of mankind required. Because Jesus loved us much, he

wished that we should love him much; and hence, he has done every thing that he could, even in his sufferings, to gain our love, and to convince us that he could do no more to obtain it. He wished to suffer much, says St. Bernard, that he might place man under a great obligation of loving him.

4. And what greater proof of love, says, our Saviour himself, can one friend give to another, than to lay down his life for him? 'Greater love than this no man hath, that a man should lay down his life for his friends.' (John xv. 13.) But you, amiable Jesus! says St. Bernard, you have done more, since you have laid down your life for us, who were not your friends, but enemies, and rebels against you. It is of this the Apostle wished to remind us, when he says: 'God commendeth this charity towards us; because, when as yet we were sinners, according to the time, Christ died for us.' (Rom. v. 8.) O my Jesus! you then wished to die for me, your enemy, and can

I resist so great a love! Behold, since you so ardently desire my love, I love you more than all things. I utterly reject every other love, and I wish to love but you alone.

5. St. John Chrysostom says that the principal object of Jesus in his Passion, was to reveal to us his love, and thus attract our hearts by the remembrance of the evils he endured for us. And St. Thomas adds, that it is by the Passion of Jesus we know the greatness of God's love for man. And St. John had said before him, 'In this we have known the charity of God, since he hath laid down his life for us.' Ah, my Jesus! lamb without spot, immolated for me on the cross, let not so many sufferings endured for me, be endured in vain. Ah! vouchsafe to apply to my soul the fruit of so many tortures. Bind me entirely with the sweet chains of your love, that I may never abandon you, and never be separated from you.

6. St. Luke relates, that Moses and Elias speaking on Thabor of the Passion of Christ, called it an excess. 'They spoke

of his excess which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem.' 'Yes,' says St. Bonaventure, 'the Passion of Jesus Christ was justly called an excess, for it was an excess of pain, and an excess of love!' And a pious author adds, 'What more could he suffer, that he did not endure? The excess of his love reached its greatest height.' The law of God obliges men to love their neighbor only as themselves; but Jesus has loved men more than himself, says St. Cyril. Thus, O my beloved Redeemer! I may say to you with St. Augustine, your love has arrived at such a degree, that you loved me more than yourself, since, in order to save me, you would give up your divine life; a life, infinitely more precious than the lives of all angels and men together.

7. 'O infinite God!' cries out the Abbot Guerric, 'for the love of man, you have become, if I may use the expression, *prodigal* of yourself.' And are you not prodigal, he adds, 'since you have given not only your possessions, but even youself to save man?'

O prodigy, O excess of love, worthy of infinite goodness alone! 'And who, O Lord!' says St. Thomas of Villanova, 'can have the most distant idea of the immensity of your love for us, when it was so great that you would die, and die upon a cross, for such contemptible worms?' 'Ah,' concludes the same saint, 'how this love exceeds all measure and understanding.'

8. It is sweet to experience the love of some great personage, particularly if he has it in his power to raise us to dignity and wealth. Now, how much more sweet and precious ought it not be to be beloved by God, who can bestow eternal riches upon us? In the old law man might doubt whether God loved him tenderly; but, after having seen him pour out his blood, and die on a gibbet, how can we doubt the exceeding tenderness of his love! Ah, my soul, look at your Jesus, who hangs all covered with wounds on a cross: see how he shews you, by these wounds, the love of his heart, which is burning with love for

you. 'We may enter the ark of his heart through the wounds of his body,' says St. Bernard. Yes, my tender Jesus! I am grieved to see you expire in the midst of so many torments on this infamous tree; but I am consoled and inflamed, because I can read through your wounds the love which you bear me. Seraphim of heaven! what do you think of the love of my God, 'who hath loved me, and delivered himself up for me?'

9. St. Paul says, that when Jesus crucified for the love of men was preached to the Gentiles, they considered it an incredible folly. (1 Cor. i. 23.) And how, might they have said, could it be possible, that an all-powerful God, who enjoyed his essential existence independently of all others, and who was infinitely happy, should wish to save men, and for that purpose become man, and die on a cross. They imagined that would be the same as to believe that a God had become a fool, through his love for men, and hence they remained incredulous.

But, we know by faith, that Jesus has undertaken and accomplished this great work of redemption, which the Gentiles believed to be, and termed folly. 'We have seen,' says St. Laurence Justinian, 'Eternal Wisdom, the only Son of God, become foolish, through his excessive love for men.' Yes, for it seems to be nothing but a folly of love, adds Cardinal Hugo, that a God should wish to die for man.

10. The blessed Giacopone, who was distinguished for his knowledge when in the world, seemed to have become a fool through his love for Jesus Christ, after he entered the Franciscan order. One day Jesus appeared to him and said: Giacopone, why do you commit those follies? Why do I commit them! answered he. Because you have taught me. If I be foolish, you are much more so for having died for me. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi was transported into an ecstacy by the same thought, and cried out, 'O God of love! O God of love! O my Jesus! the love which

you bear men is too great.' And on a certain day, in a transport of love, she took a crucifix and ran through the monastery, crying out, 'O Love! O Love! My God! I will never cease to call you Love!' When she had returned to her religious, she said to them: 'Don't you know, my dear sisters, that Jesus is nothing but love: and what is more, a fool of love! I am telling what you are, O my Jesus! and I will always proclaim it.' She added, that when she called Jesus, *Love*, she wished to be heard by the entire world, so that the love of Jesus might be known and loved by all men; and sometimes she went to ring the bell, in order that, if possible, all nations might come, as she desired, to love her Jesus.

11. Yes, my sweet Redeemer! allow me to say to you, that this tender spouse had good reason to call you a fool of love; and was it not a folly, that you should wish to die for me—to die for an ungrateful worm of the earth as I am; and with whose sins and treachery you were previously ac-

quainted! But if you, my God! have become a fool of love for me, should not I become a fool of love for a God? After having seen you die for me, how can I think of any thing, how can I love any thing but you? Yes, my Lord! my sovereign good, and supremely amiable Jesus! I love you more than I do myself. I promise you not to love for the future any thing but you, and to meditate constantly on the love you have shewn for me, by dying for my sake, amid such cruel torments.

12. O scourges! O thorns! O nails! O cross! O wounds! O dolours! O death of my Jesus! You press me too much, you force me too much to love him, who has so loved me. O Incarnate Word! O loving God! my soul is inflamed with your love. I desire to love you in such a manner as to find no other pleasure except that of pleasing you, O my amiable Master! Since you so ardently desire my love, I protest, that I do not wish to live except for you. Yes, I wish to do every thing that you shall re-

quire of me. O my Jesus! assist me; grant that I may please you entirely and always, in time and eternity. Mary, my Mother! pray to Jesus for me, that he may bestow on me his love, for I desire nothing in this life, or the next, but the love of Jesus. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

JESUS, THROUGH LOVE FOR US, WISHED TO SUFFER THE DOLOURS OF HIS PASSION, FROM THE VERY BEGINNING OF HIS LIFE.

1. It was in order that he should be loved by man, that the Eternal Word came into the world to assume human nature. Hence, he came with so great a thirst for suffering for the love of us, that he would not rest one moment without suffering—at least, in apprehension. He had scarcely been conceived in his mother's womb, when

he represented to himself all the torments of his Passion; and in order to obtain pardon, and the divine grace for us, he offered himself to his Eternal Father, to atone by his sufferings for the chastisements due to our sins. From thence he began to suffer every thing that he afterwards endured in his painful death. Ah, my Redeemer! you have thus loved me, and what have I as yet done, what have I suffered for you? If for your sake I should suffer for a thousand years all the torments which all the martyrs have endured, it would be still nothing in comparison, even with that first moment, when you made an offering of yourself, and began to suffer for me.

2. The martyrs, it is true, suffered great tortures and ignominies; but their suffering continued only during the time of their martrydom. Jesus constantly suffered from the first moment of his life all the pains of his Passion; because, from that time he placed before his eyes the horrible scene in which he was to suffer so much torment, and so

many insults from men. Thus, he said by the mouth of the Prophet, 'My sorrow is always in my sight.' (Ps. xxxvii. 18.) Ah, my Jesus! your love of me made you thirst so much for suffering, that you would even suffer before the time, and I thirst so much after the pleasures of the world! How often have I displeased you, in order to gratify my body! O Lord! I beseech you by the merits of your sufferings, to extinguish in my heart every attachment to earthly pleasures. For the love of you, I resolve to abstain from such a gratification. (*Mention it.*)

3. God in his compassion for us, does not reveal to us, until the time of suffering, the punishments that await us. If a criminal who expires on a gibbet had known, by revelation, from the time he arrived at the use of reason, the punishment which he was to endure, could he ever have one joyful moment? If the sword which was to pierce Saul had been presented to him at the commencement of his reign—if Judas had seen

beforehand the rope that was to strangle him—how bitter would not have been their lives? Our amiable Redeemer from the first moment of his, had the scourges, the thorns, the cross, the ignominies of his Passion, the painful death which awaited him, always present before him. When he saw the victims, he knew all of them figured the sacrifice of himself, the Lamb without spot, that was to be offered on the altar of the cross—when he beheld the city of Jerusalem, he knew well it was there he was to lose his life, in a sea of bitterness and suffering—when he cast his eyes on his tender Mother, he fancied that he already saw her in an agony of grief at the foot of the cross on which he was to expire. Thus, O my Jesus! the horrible prospect of so many evils kept you in perpetual torment and affliction, long before the moment of your death, and you accepted and suffered all this for the love of me!

4. O suffering Jesus! the sight of all the sins of the world, and particularly of those

by which you foresaw that I would offend you, sufficed to make your life more afflicted, and more painful, than all past or future existences. But, O God! in what barbarous law is it written, that a God shall have such a love as this for one of his creatures, and that nevertheless, this creature should live without loving its God; what do I say, should live only to insult and afflict him? Ah, Lord! make me know the greatness of your love, that I may cease to be ungrateful. Ah, if I loved you, my Jesus! if I loved you in reality, I should find it most sweet to suffer for your sake!

5. Jesus crucified appeared one day to Sister Magdelene Orsini, who had been a long time in tribulation, and exhorted her to suffer with patience. The servant of God answered: Lord! you have been only three hours on the cross, whilst I have been in this torture for many years. Jesus said to her in reply: ah, ignorant creature! what do you say? From the first moment I entered my mother's womb, I suffered in my

heart all that I endured so long after on the cross.

And when I behold all that you have suffered during your whole life, for the love of me, how can I, my beloved Redeemer! complain of the crosses which you have sent me for my good? I thank you for having redeemed me at the expense of so much love, and so much suffering. You would burthen yourself with all our evils, to encourage me to suffer patiently all the afflictions of this life. Ah, Lord! recall your sorrows frequently to my mind, that I may be prepared, and always desire to suffer for your love.

6. 'Great like the sea, is thy destruction.' (Lament. ii. 3.) As the waters of the sea are entirely salt and bitter, so the life of Jesus was all filled with bitterness, and destitute of every comfort, as he himself declared to St. Margaret of Cortona. Moreover, as all the waters of the earth meet in the sea, so all the sufferings of man were united in Jesus Christ. Hence, he

says, through the mouth of the Psalmist: 'Save me, O God! for the waters are come in, even unto my soul; I am come into the depth of the sea, and a tempest hath overwhelmed me.' (Ps. 69, i. 3.) Save me, O my God! for tribulations have entered into my inmost soul, and I am overwhelmed by a tempest of opprobrium, of exterior and interior sorrows. Ah, my tender Jesus! my love! my life! my all! if I look at your sacred body, I behold nothing but wounds. If I then enter into your desolate heart, I find nothing but bitterness and the anguish of death. Ah! my Divine Master! what other being but you, who are infinite goodness, would suffer so much as this, and even die for your poor creature? But, because you are a God, you love like a God, with a love that no other can equal.

7. St. Bernard says, that 'neither the Father spared his Son, nor the Son himself, in order to redeem a slave.' O infinite charity of God! On the one side, the Eternal Father commands Jesus Christ to

make satisfaction for the sins of all men—'He hath placed upon him the iniquity of us all.' (Isaias liii.) On the other, Jesus, for the salvation of mankind, displays in their regard, all the love in his power, and undertakes to satisfy the utmost rigor of divine justice; whence St. Thomas concludes, that he submitted to the highest degree of all sufferings and ignominies. For the same reason Isaias called him 'a man of sorrows, and the most despised amongst men,' (liii;) and with justice; for, whilst Jesus was tormented in all his members and senses, he suffered still more grievous torments in all the powers of his soul. His interior pains immensely exceeded his exterior sufferings. Behold him then, mangled, half dead, treated as a seducer, a magician, a fool; abandoned even by his friends, and at length persecuted in every shape, until he ends his life on an infamous gibbet!

8. 'Do you know what I have done to you?' (John xiii. 12.) Lord! I well know

every thing that you have done and suffered for me; but you know that up to this moment I have done nothing for you. My Jesus! enable me to suffer something for you before death approaches. I blush to appear before you; but I no longer wish to be, as I have hitherto been, ungrateful to you. You have deprived yourself of all pleasure for me; and I renounce, for the love of you, all sensual pleasures. You have suffered so many grievous torments for me, I desire to suffer for you all the pains of my life and death, according to your will. You have been abandoned; I consent to be abandoned by every thing, provided I am not forsaken by you, my only and sovereign good. You have been persecuted; I accept all kinds of persecution. In a word, you have died for me; I wish to die for you. Ah! my Jesus! my treasure my love, my all! I love you; grant me an increase of your love. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE GREAT DESIRE WHICH JESUS HAD TO SUFFER AND DIE FOR THE LOVE OF US.

1. What tenderness and love, and how many titles to our affection does not our Divine Redeemer exhibit in the reasons which he has assigned for coming upon the earth! He says, he came to light up in souls the fire of divine love; and, that he had no other desire but to see this holy flame enkindled in the hearts of all men. 'I came to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I, but that it be kindled? (Luke xii. 49.) He immediately added, that he desired to be baptized in the baptism of his own blood; not to wash away his own sins —for he was impeccable—but our crimes, which he came to expiate by his sufferings. 'The Passion of Christ,' says St. Bonaventure, 'is called a baptism, because we are washed clean in his blood.' Afterwards,

our amiable Jesus, in order to make us comprehend all the ardor of his desire to die for us, declares, in the sweetest expressions of love, that he experienced the most lively anguish, because the time of his Passion was delayed, so great was his desire to suffer for the love of us. Behold his amorous words: 'I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I straitened, until it be accomplished!' (Luke xii. 50.)

2. O God! who burnest for the love of men! what more could you say or do to place me under the necessity of loving you? And what great advantage could my love procure you, that you would die to obtain it, and that you so ardently wished for death? If one of my servants had only desired to die for me, he would obtain my love; and yet I can live without loving you with all the affection of my heart—you, my King, my God! you, who died for me, and who had so great a desire to die in order to obtain my love!

3. 'Jesus, knowing that his hour was come wherein he was to pass out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.' (John xiii.) St. John says, that Jesus called the hour of his Passion, *his hour;* because, as a pious commentator writes, this was the moment of his life that was most earnestly longed for by our Divine Redeemer; because, likewise, in suffering and dying for man, he wished to make him comprehend the great love he bore him. To him that loves, the hour is dear in which he suffers for the object of his love, because suffering is the best method of manifesting the love of the one, and of gaining that of the other. Ah! my tender Jesus! it was then in order to shew me the greatness of your love, that you would entrust the work of my redemption to no one but yourself. Was my love of such importance to you, that you would suffer so much in order to obtain it? What more could you do if you had to gain the love of your

Divine Father? What more could a servant do, to gain the affection of his master, than you have suffered to purchase the love of a vile and ungrateful sinner like me?

4. But contemplate our amiable Jesus on the eve of being sacrificed on the altar of the cross for our salvation, on that blessed night that preceded his Passion. Let us listen to his words; what does he say to his Disciples at the last supper which he held with them. 'With desire,' said he, 'I have desired to eat this Pasch with you.' (Luke xxii.) St. Laurence Justinian assures us, that all these words were expressive of love. As if our amiable Redeemer had said; Know, mankind, that this night on which I commence my Passion, is the period of my life, for which I have most fervently sighed; because it is now by my sufferings and cruel death, I am going to prove to you, the extent of my love, and thus oblige you to love me with a love as strong as possible. An author says, that in the Passion of Jesus, the divine omnipo-

tence was united to love. Love wished to love man to the entire extent of almighty power, and omnipotence wished to second love in all the extent of its desire.

O infinite God! you have then given yourself entirely to me: why therefore should I not love you with all the powers of my being? I believe, yes, I believe that you died for me; and why do I love you so little as frequently to forget you altogether, and every thing you have suffered for me? Ah! why, O Lord! even when I think of your Passion, am I not all on fire with love? Why am I not entirely yours, like so many holy souls, who by the consideration of your sufferings became the happy captives of your love, and gave themselves up entirely to you?

5. The spouse in the Canticles said, that whenever her spouse introduced her into the cellar of his passion, she was so straitened at every side by divine love, that she was obliged to seek for relief for her wounded heart, which was all languishing with love.

'The King brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me; stay me up with flowers, compass me with apples, because I languish with love.' (Cant. ii. 4.) And how is it possible that a soul which considers the Passion of Jesus Christ should not be wounded as if with so many arrows of love, by those griefs and anguishes which so cruelly tortured the body and soul of her beloved, and should not be forced by a sweet violence to love him, who has so much loved her?

O Lamb without spot! torn, mangled, bloody, and disfigured though you seem on this cross, yet how beautiful and lovely do you not appear in my eyes? Yes, for all these wounds which I see upon you, are so many signs and proofs to me of the great love which you bear me. Ah! if all men would often contemplate you in the condition you were one day exposed as a spectacle to Jerusalem who is it that would not be taken by your love? Admirable Master! accept my love: I consecrate to you all my

senses and all my will. How can I refuse you any thing, since you did not refuse me your blood, nor your life, nor your entire self?

6. So great was the desire of Jesus to suffer for us, that on the night before his death he not only went most willingly to the garden, whither he knew the Jews were to come to apprehend him, but even when he was aware that the traitor Judas was approaching with a troop of soldiers, he said to his disciples: 'arise, let us go; behold, he who will betray me is nigh.' (Mark xiv. 42.) He wished to go to meet them himself, as if they were not coming to put him to death, but to make him ascend the throne of a great empire. O my sweet Saviour! why did you go out to meet death with so great a desire of dying for us? In order to shew you the love that I bore you. Yes, my Jesus, as you died for me, I desire to die for you. Behold me ready to die for you whenever you wish and in any manner you please. Deign to receive this pitiful

sacrifice which is offered you by a miserable sinner who has been offending you up to this moment, but who now loves you more than he loves himself.

7. St. Laurence Justinian says, that the word *I thirst*, spoken by Jesus when dying is not to be attributed to any thing but the thirst created by his burning love for us. Thus by these words our Saviour wished to shew us not so much his bodily thirst as the desire which he had to die for us, and to convince us by so much suffering of his love towards us, and his wish to be loved by us in return. By this word, *I thirst*, is shown his ardent desire for the salvation of mankind. Ah! God of love! is it possible such an excess of goodness should exist without any return on our part? We are wont to say that love is repaid by love; but what love will be ever able to repay yours? Another God should die for you if you were to be compensated for your love in dying for us. And now, O Lord! how could you say that your delight was to be

with the children of men, since you receive nothing from them but injuries and ill treatment? Does love then transform into delights those pains and outrages which you suffer for us?

8. O my all amiable Redeemer! I will no longer resist your efforts, I bestow you all my love. Amongst every thing else, you are and you ought to be the only well-beloved of my soul. You became man, that you might have a life which you could surrender for me: I wish I had a thousand lives to sacrifice for you. I love you, O infinite goodness! and I wish to love you with all my strength. I wish to do every thing in my power to please you. You, an innocent Lamb, have suffered so much for me; and I, a sinner, who have deserved hell, wish to suffer for you as much as you please. Strengthen, O my Jesus! by your merits, this desire which you yourself have given me. O infinite God! I believe in you: I hope in you: I love you. O Mary, my mother! intercede for me. Amen.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE LOVE WHICH JESUS DISPLAYED TOWARDS US, IN LEAVING US HIMSELF FOR OUR FOOD, BEFORE HE SUFFERED DEATH.

1. Jesus, knowing that his hour was come when he should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved his own he loved them to the end. (John xiii.) On the last night of his life our amiable Saviour, knowing that the hour after which he had so long sighed was come, and that he was to die for man, would not—his heart could not permit him—leave us alone in this valley of tears. But in order that he should not be separated from us even by death, he wished to leave us his entire self for our food in the sacrament of the altar, and by this means give us to understand that after this infinite gift he had no further proof of his love to bestow us. 'He loved them to the end.' Cornelius a Lapide, with St.

Chrysostom and Theophylact explains this phrase, 'unto the end,' according to the Greek text, and says, 'He loved them to the end,' *that is, he loved them with a boundless and supreme love.* In this sacrament, says Abbot Gueric, Jesus made the last effort of his love towards men.

2. This sentiment was still better expressed by the holy Council of Trent, which treating on the sacrament of the Altar says, that in it our Saviour has poured out, if we may use the term, 'all the riches of his love for us.' The angelic doctor had good reason therefore to call this sacrament the sacrament of love, and a pledge of the most wonderful love which God could bestow on man. St. Bernard calls it, 'the love of loves,' and St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi said, that a soul after communion might say: all is consummated; that is to say, my God having given himself to me in this communion, has nothing more to bestow me. This saint one day asked one of her novices what she was thinking

of, after communion? she replied, of the love of Jesus. Yes, replied the saint, when you think of love, you cannot go beyond it, but it is a necessity to be bounded by love.

3. O Saviour of the world! what could you expect to gain from men, by carrying your love to such an extent, as to give yourself for their food? After the institution of this sacrament, what more can you now give us to oblige us to love you? Ah! God of infinite goodness! enlighten me and make me comprehend the excess of goodness which induced you to become my food in the holy communion. If, therefore, you have given yourself entirely to me, it is just that I should give myself entirely to you. Yes, my Jesus! I give myself all to you. I love you more than any other good, and I desire to receive you, that I may love you more; come then, and come frequently to my soul, and make it henceforth belong to you. Happy is he who can say to you with truth, what St. Philip Neri said in a transport of love, when he was receiving the

Viaticum, 'Behold my Love! Behold my Love! Give me my Love!'

4. 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, remaineth in me, and I in him.' (John vi. 57.) St. Denis, the Areopagite, says, that love always tends, to an union with the beloved object, and because food becomes the same substance with him that eats it, our Saviour, therefore, wished to make himself our food, in order, that by receiving him in the holy communion we might become the same substance with him. 'Take ye and eat,' said Jesus, 'This is my body.' (Matt. xxxi.) As if he would say, observes St. Chrysostom, 'O man! nourish yourself with me, in order that you and I may become the same thing.' St. Cyril of Alexandria says, 'as two pieces of melted wax unite together, thus the union of the soul with Jesus in the communion is so intimate, that Jesus remains in her, and she in Jesus.' O my tender Saviour! cries out St. Laurence Justinian, how admirable is your love, when you wish to be united to

us in such a manner that your heart and ours should form but one heart!

5. St. Francis of Sales, then had good reason to say when speaking of the holy communion, that no action of our Saviour could be considered more loving or more tender than this; in which he, as it were, annihilated himself, and gave himself as food to enter into our souls, and be united to the hearts of his faithful in such a manner, that St. John Chrysostom says, we are made one body, and one flesh with that very Lord whom the angels behold with trembling. 'But what shepherd,' adds the same saint, 'nourishes his sheep with his own blood? Even mothers themselves give their children to be fed by strange nurses, whilst Jesus in this sacrament nourishes his children with his own blood; and unites himself to them.' The saint continues and says, that it is because he loved us tenderly he wished to become our food, and the same substance with us.

6. O Infinite love! worthy of infinite

love! when shall I love you, my God! as you have loved me? O divine nourishment! O sacrament of love! when you shall attract me entirely to yourself, you will have nothing more to do in order to gain my love. I always wish to begin to love you. I always promise you to do so, and yet I never begin. I wish to begin to-day to love you in earnest. Assist me, enlighten me, inflame me, wean me from the earth, and do not permit me to resist any longer all the efforts of your love. I love you with my whole heart, and for this reason I wish to renounce every thing in order to please you alone, O my life! my love! my all! I wish to be often united to you in this sacrament, in order that I may be weaned from every thing else, and love you alone. My God! I depend on your goodness for strength to fulfil my promises.

7. St. Laurence Justinian says, 'we have seen a God of wisdom become foolish through the excessive love which he bore us!' And does not it appear madness,

says St. Augustine, that a God should give himself as food to his creatures? If there be even any thing more which a creature may say to his creator, we may presume to say, that such was the greatness of God's love for us that it made him 'out of himself,' to use the expression of St. Denis. But, O Lord! such an excess of love does not become thy majesty. To this Jesus answers by the mouth of St. Chrysostom, that love has no regard for what is suitable or convenient when it displays itself to the object of its love; it is not led by reason but by its desire. Ah! my Jesus how do I blush for myself, when I reflect that I have wandered after the love of vile and contemptible objects; and forsaken you, although I knew you to be infinitely good, infinitely lovely, although I was aware that you so ardently loved my soul? I beseech you, O my God! to reveal to me every day more and more the greatness of your bounty, in order that I may be more abundantly filled with your love, and make every effort to

please you. Ah! my divine master! where can I find an object of love more beautiful, more desirable, more holy, or more lovely than you! I love you, O infinite goodness! I love you more than myself, and I do not desire to live, but for the purpose of loving you, who deserve my entire love.

8. St. Paul considers the time at which Jesus bestowed upon us the gift of the Eucharist, a gift which surpasses all plenitude, as St. Clement says—a gift greater than which, says St. Augustine, almighty power could not bestow. The apostle, I say, takes into account the time it was bestowed. 'The Lord Jesus, *on the night in which he was betrayed*, took bread, and giving thanks, broke and said, Take ye and eat: this is my body, which shall be delivered for you.' (1 Cor. xi.) It was then on that very night, when men were conspiring to torment and put Jesus to death, that this Redeemer of infinite goodness was on his part resolving to leave himself in this sacrament for the nourishment of men, to

convince them that his love was so great, as not to be cooled by all their ingratitude, and that it would shew itself at that very moment more lively and tender than ever. Ah, Lord! all amiable as you are, how could you love men to such a degree, as to remain with them on earth as their food, whilst those very men were persecuting you with so much ingratitude!

Behold still farther, the immense desire which our Saviour had during his whole life for the arrival of that night, on which he had resolved to bequeath us so precious a pledge of his love; for at the moment of instituting this august sacrament he said, 'With desire, I have desired to eat this Pasch with you,' (Luke xxii.) words by which he shewed the ardent desire he had of being united to us in communion, in consequence of the love which he bore us. 'This is the speech of a most burning love,' says St. Laurence Justinian. Jesus preserves the same ardor, even to this day, for all those who love him. He said one day

to St. Mectilda, that the bee does not light upon a flower to suck its honey with greater avidity, than he comes urged by the violence of his love, to the soul that desires him.

9. O too loving friend! you have no greater proofs to give me, to convince me of your love. I thank your goodness. Ah! my Jesus! draw me entirely to yourself. Grant that I may henceforth love you with all the tenderness of my love. Let it suffice for others to love you only with a love of appreciation and predominance. I know you will be satisfied with it. But I will not be satisfied until I love you besides with more tenderness than a friend, than a brother, than a spouse; and where shall I be able to find the friend, the brother, or the spouse, who would love me as much as you do, O my Creator, my Saviour, and my God! who for love of me gave up your blood and your life, and who after all this bestowed me your entire self in this sacrament of love? I love you then, O my Jesus! with all my love, I love you more

than myself. Enable me to love you, and I will ask nothing more.

10. St. Bernard says, that God loved us for no other reason but that he should be loved by us. And hence our Saviour protests that he came to earth only to make himself loved; 'I have come to cast fire upon the earth.' And what holy flames has not Jesus enkindled in souls by this divine sacrament! The venerable father, Francis Olympio, of the order of Theatines said, that nothing was more capable of inflaming our hearts, with love for the Sovereign Good, than the holy communion. Hesychius called Jesus in this sacrament *a divine fire;* and St. Catharine of Sienna, one day saw Jesus in the hands of a priest in the shape of a furnace of love, so that she wondered the whole world was not set on fire by it. The altar, says the Abbot Rupert, with St. Gregory of Nyssa, is the wine cellar in which the spouse of Jesus became so much intoxicated with the love of her Lord, that forgetting the world she is consumed by

the holy and sweet languishments of love. 'The king has brought me into his wine cellar,' says the spouse in the Canticles, 'he has set in order charity in me; support me with flowers, compass me with apples, because I languish with love.' (Cant. ii. 3.)

11. O love of my heart! most holy sacrament! Oh! may I always think of you, and forget every thing else, that I may always and without reserve love you alone! Ah! my Jesus! you have been so long knocking at the door of my heart, that you have at length entered in. I hope that you have. But since you have entered, chase away, I beseech you, every affection which is not directed to you. Take possession of me in such a manner, that I may be able to say from this moment like the royal prophet, 'what have I in heaven, and besides thee what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever.' (Ps. lxxii. 26.) My God! what can I desire except you either in heaven or on earth? You alone are, and

always will be, the only master of my heart and my will, and you alone ought to be all my inheritance, all my riches in this life and the next.

12. Go, said the Prophet Isaias, go and publish to all nations these inventions of the love of our God, to make himself loved by men. 'You shall draw waters with joy out of the fountains of the Saviour: and you shall say in that day, praise ye the Lord and call upon his name; make his inventions known amongst the people.' (Isaias xii. 3.) And what inventions has not the love of Jesus discovered, in order to make himself loved by us? On the cross he wished to open for us, in his sacred wounds, so many sources of grace, to partake of which we had only to ask it with confidence; but not content with this, he would leave us his entire self in this most holy sacrament.

13. O man! says St. Chrysostom, why are you so covetous, why do you give yourself with so much reserve to a God, who has

given himself to you without any reserve? Behold, says the angelic doctor, what Jesus has done for us in the sacrament of the altar. He has given us every thing that he is, and every thing that he possesses. Behold, adds St. Bonaventure, how this immense God, whom the universe cannot contain, becomes our prisoner and our captive, when we receive him in the holy communion. For this reason, St. Bernard, considering this excess of love, said: my Jesus wished to make himself the inseparable guest of my heart; and since my God, continued he, would give himself altogether for my love, it is quite just that I should employ my entire being in serving and loving him.

14. Ah! my tender Jesus! tell me what more could you invent in order to make yourself loved! And yet I could persevere in being so ungrateful towards you, as I have been up to this moment? Do not suffer it, O Lord! You have said that he who is nourished by your flesh in com-

munion, shall live under the influence of your grace. 'He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me.' (John vi.) Since, therefore, you permit me to receive you in the holy communion, grant that my soul may always live the true life of your grace. I am sorry, O my Sovereign Good! for having hitherto neglected you, but I heartily thank you for having given me time to bewail the outrages I have committed against you, and time to love you upon this earth. For the rest of my life, I wish to fix all my love on you, and to study to please you as much as I can. O my Jesus! come to my assistance, and do not abandon me. Save me by your merits, and may my salvation consist in always loving you, both in this life and in eternity. Mary, my mother! do you also assist me.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE BLOODY SWEAT AND AGONY OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN.

1. Behold how our amiable Saviour, having arrived at the Garden of Gethsemani, wished to begin himself his dolorous Passion. He permitted fear, and weakness, and sadness to afflict him, with all their horrors. 'He began to fear and grow heavy, and be sorrowful.' (Mark xiv. Mat. xxv.) He began, therefore, by experiencing a great fear of the death and sufferings which he was to undergo. *He began to fear.* But why? Was he not the Redeemer, who willingly offered himself to these torments? *He was offered, because he willed it.* Was it not he who so ardently desired this time of his Passion? and who had said a short time previously, *With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you?* How comes it then to pass, that he

now finds himself seized with so great a fear of death, that he even beseeches his Father to deliver him from it? 'My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass away from me.' (Matt. xxvi. 29.) The venerable Bede answers this question, and says, He prays that the chalice may pass away, in order to shew that he was really man. Our good Saviour was prepared to suffer cheerfully, in order to convince us, by his death, of the love he entertained for us. But lest men should imagine he had assumed only a fantastic body, as certain heretics blasphemously asserted, or that, by virtue of his divinity, he had died without experiencing any pain—he addressed this prayer to his Father, not for the purpose of being heard, but to give us to understand, that he died as man, and that he died with a great fear of death, and the sufferings which accompany it.

O Jesus! O amiable Jesus! you would assume our timidity, that you might communicate to us your courage, in suffering

the evils of this life. Blessed for ever be this tender compassion. May all our hearts love you as much as you desire, and as much as you deserve!

2. *He began to be weary.* He likewise began to feel a strong distaste for the torments that were preparing for him. Whenever there is distaste, even delights themselves are changed into bitterness. Experiencing, therefore, this distaste, what anguish must not Jesus have suffered from the frightful image which now presented itself to his spirit, of all the interior and exterior torments which were during the remainder of his life, to martyr his body and his holy soul in so cruel a manner! Now are distinctly presented to his view all the pains he was to suffer, all the affronts he was to receive from the Jews and the Romans, all the injustice of which the judges in his cause were to be guilty towards him. Above all, he saw himself near that painful death which he was to suffer, abandoned by all, by men and by his Father, in a sea

of griefs, of insult and contempt. This was what caused him so bitter a distaste, that he was obliged to call on his Eternal Father for assistance. Ah! my Jesus! I sympathize and share in your sufferings; I thank you, and I love you.

3. 'But an angel appeared, comforting him.' (Luke xxii.) This assistance came; but this succour, says the venerable Bede, rather increased than assuaged his pain. Yes, for the angel brought him strength only to render him capable of suffering more for the love of men, and for the glory of his Father. Oh! what torment did you not endure, my amiable Jesus! in the first combat! In the course of your Passion, the scourges, the thorns, the nails, inflicted only successive pain, but in the garden of sorrows all the sufferings of your Passion assailed you together, and you accepted them all for the love of me, and for my benefit. Ah! my God! how much do I regret that I have not hitherto loved you, and that I have sacrificed your will to my

criminal pleasures! I detest them more than all other evil, and I repent of them from my whole heart. My Jesus, forgive me.

4. 'He began to be sorrowful and sad.' In addition to his fear and distaste, Jesus began also to experience a great sadness and affliction of spirit. But was it not you, O Lord! who filled the martyrs with so much joy in their sufferings, that they even despised torments and death itself? St. Augustine relates that St. Vincent, during his martyrdom, spoke with so much cheerfulness, that you would imagine the person who suffered and who spoke was not the same. It is said of St. Laurence, that whilst roasting on his gridiron, so great was his consolation, that he defied the tyrant, and said to him: *Turn me and eat.* And after this, O my Jesus! how is it that you, who have given to your servants such joy in their torments, should take as your portion under your own, so great a sorrow?

5. O Delight of Paradise! You fill

heaven and earth with your joy. Why, therefore, do I behold you so afflicted and so sad; why do I hear you say, that the sadness which you feel is sufficient to cause your death? 'My soul is sorrowful even unto death.' (Mark xiv. 14.) Ah! my Saviour! I hear you reply to me, that it was not so many sufferings of your Passion, but rather the sins of men, and particularly mine, which at this moment produced in you so great a fear of death.

6. The Eternal Word hated sin as much as he loved his Father, for he knew all its malice. It was to destroy sin in the world, and to prevent his beloved Father from being offended any more, that he became man and resolved to suffer so cruel a death. But foreseeing, nevertheless, that in spite of all his sufferings so many sins would be committed in the world, he experienced, says St. Thomas, a grief which exceeded the greatest sorrow of all penitent sinners for their own crimes—a grief, which surpassed any punishment that could afflict the heart of

man. The reason is, that all the sufferings of men are mingled with some consolation; but the sorrow of Jesus was a pure, unmixed grief, without any alleviation. Ah! if I only loved you! if I loved you! O my Jesus! when I behold all you suffered for me—all the afflictions, all the contempt and ill-treatment of the world would seem sweet to me. Ah! give me your love, that I may suffer with pleasure, or at least with patience the small portion of suffering which you have allotted me. Let me not die until I render you my acknowledgments for this excess of your love. I resolve, in the tribulations which you will send me, always to say: My Jesus! I embrace this affliction for the love of you: I desire to suffer, in order to please you.

7. We read in history that penitents have died with grief in contemplating the malice of their sins, which was revealed to them by divine light. Now, how must not the heart of Jesus have been wounded at the sight of all the sins of the world, of all the

blasphemies, the sacrileges, the impurities and other crimes that were to be committed by men after his death, each of which came like a wild beast to rend his heart by a particular torment. It was for this reason, our Saviour in his agony in the garden said, in his affliction: O men! is this then the return you make me for my immense love? Ah! if I could but see, that influenced by gratitude, you would avoid sin, and begin to love me, oh! with what joy would I now go to die for you! But to see, after so much suffering—so many sins; after so much love—such excessive ingratitude—this is what afflicts me, this is what makes me sorrowful, even unto death, this is what produces my bloody sweat. 'And his sweat was, as it were, droops of blood falling down to the ground.' (Luke xxii. 24.) And, according to the Evangelist, this sweat was so copious, that after falling down the garments of the Saviour, it still flowed upon the earth.

8. Ah! my tender Jesus! I do not per-

ceive in this garden the stripes, the thorns, or the nails, which tore your tender flesh; why, then, do I behold you all bathed in blood from head to feet? My sins were the cruel pressure that forced from your heart so great a quantity of blood. I was then, yes, even I, was one of your most cruel executioners! I assisted in tormenting you by my sins. It is certain, that if I had sinned less than I have done, you would have suffered less. In proportion then to my sins, have I increased at this moment your affliction, and the anguish of your heart. And should I not expire with sorrow when I reflect, that my only return for the love you displayed towards me in your Passion, was, to increase your sufferings and your sorrow? I have then tormented this heart that is so amiable and so tender—this heart that has loved me so much! O Lord! since at this moment I have no other means of consoling you but by afflicting myself for having offended you, I am, my Jesus! I am afflicted, and I repent for my sins with my whole

heart. Give me so lively a sorrow, that I may weep, even to my last breath, for all the offences I have committed against you, my God! my Love! and my All!

9. 'He fell upon his face.' (Matt. xxvi.) Jesus, supporting the heavy burthen of making satisfaction for all the sins of the world, prostrates himself upon the earth, in order to pray for man, as if he were ashamed to lift up his eyes to heaven, charged, as he was, with so many iniquities. Ah! my Saviour! I behold you all pale and plunged in sorrow, through the excess of your pain. You are in the agonies of death, and you pray: 'Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly.' (Luke xxii.) Tell me, for whom do you pray? Ah! at this moment it was not so much for yourself that you prayed, as for me; you offered to your Eternal Father your powerful prayers, united with your sufferings, to obtain for me, all miserable as I am, the pardon of my offences! 'Who, in the days of his flesh, offering up prayers and suppli-

cations to him who could save him from death, with a strong cry and tears, was heard for his reverence.' (Heb. v. 7.) Ah! my Redeemeer! how could you love so much him who so grievously offended you? How could you endure so many sufferings for me, when you foresaw the ingratitude of which I was to be guilty towards you!

10. Ah! my good Master! make me share in that sorrow which you then felt for my sins. I now abhor them, and I unite my abhorrence with that which you felt in the garden. Ah! my Saviour! do not look at my sins; the punishment of hell would be too little for me; consider the sufferings you have endured for me. O love of my Jesus! You are my love and my hope. O Lord! I love you with my whole soul, and I desire to love you for ever. Ah! through the merits of that distaste and sorrow, which you suffered in the garden, grant me fervor and courage in every thing I shall undertake for your glory. Grant me, through the merits of your agony,

strength to resist all the temptations of the flesh and of hell. Grant me grace always to place myself in your hands, and to say constantly with my Redeemer, *Not my will, but thine be done.* Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE LOVE WHICH JESUS MANIFESTED TOWARDS US IN SUFFERING SO MUCH CONTEMPT DURING HIS PASSION.

1. BELLARMIN says, that noble minds are more afflicted by ignominy and contempt, than by bodily sufferings. In reality, if the latter torment the body, the former afflict the soul, whose suffering is greater inasmuch as it is more noble than the body. But who could have imagined that the greatest personage in heaven or on earth—that the son of God, who came into the world, and was made man for the love of

men, that he should be exposed to so much contempt, and so many injuries, as if he were the very last and most despicable of mankind? 'We have seen him despised, and the last of men.' (Isaias xliii. 2.) St. Anselm assures us, that Jesus Christ suffered so many affronts in his Passion, that he could not be more humbled than he was.

O King of the universe! you are the greatest of all Kings, and yet you would be despised more than all men, to teach me to love contempt. Since, then, you would sacrifice your honor for my love, I wish to suffer for your love, all the affronts that may be offered me.

2. And what species of ignominy did not our Saviour endure in his Passion! One of his own disciples betrays and sells him for thirty pieces of money: another repeatedly denies him, protests publicly that he knows him not, and even swears that he is ashamed to recognize him for an acquaintance. All his other disciples, seeing him taken and bound, fled and abandoned him: 'Then his

disciples leaving him, all fled away.' (Mark xiv.)

O abandoned Jesus! who will undertake your defence, if, at the very commencement, your dearest friends flee away and forsake you? But, O God! this insult has not ended with your Passion. How many souls are there, who, after having been admitted into your society, after having received from you multiplied graces and special marks of love, will, for some vile interest, for human respect, or the love of guilty pleasures, become ungrateful and forsake you! Let him who finds himself amongst the number of these ungrateful wretches, say with a sigh; Ah! my tender Jesus! forgive me, I will never again forsake you. It is better to lose my life, nay, a thousand lives, than to lose your grace, my God! my Love! and my All!

3. Behold Judas, who has now arrived in the garden with the soldiers—see how he advances, embraces his master, and kisses him! Jesus permits him to kiss him; but

as he was aware of his treacherous design, he could not refrain from complaining to himself of this black treason, and hence he said to him: 'Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?' (Luke xxii.) At that moment the insolent ministers of his crime, rushed upon Jesus, fastened his hands behind his back, and bound him like a malefactor: 'The servants of the Jews apprehended Jesus and bound him.' (John xviii.)

Heavens! what do I behold! A God bound with cords! and by whom? By men, by the very worms of the earth, which he had himself created! Angels of heaven! what do you say! and you, my Jesus! why would you suffer yourself to be bound? O! says St. Bernard, what have the chains of slaves and criminals to do with you who are the Holy of holies, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords?

But if men load you with chains, why do you not break them asunder, and deliver yourself from the torments and death which

they are preparing for you? Oh! I understand, my Master; these are not the chains that bind you. It is love alone that holds you captive, and that induces you to suffer and die for me. O Divine love! cries out St. Laurence Justinian, you alone could bind a God, and lead him to death, for the love of men.

4. 'O man!' says St. Bonaventure, 'look at those wolves—see how they drag him along, and how this Lamb, like a patient victim, follows them without resistance. One apprehends him, another binds him, a third drives him forward, a fourth strikes him.' They then conduct our sweet Saviour, pinioned in this manner, first to Annas, and then to Caiphas. Jesus being interrogated by this wicked man, on his disciples and his doctrine, replied that he had never spoken in secret, but in public, and that those who surrounded him well knew what he had advanced. 'I have spoken openly; behold, these know what I have said.' (John xviii.) But at this answer, one of

the servants looking upon his conduct as rash and impertinent, gave him a rude blow. 'One of the attendants standing by, gave Jesus a blow, saying, 'Is it thus thou answerest the High Priest?' Here St. Jerome cries out, 'O ye Angels! how can you be silent? Is it this great patience that strikes you dumb with amazement?'

Ah! my Jesus! how could so just and modest a reply deserve such an affront, in the presence of so great a multitude? The unworthy High Priest commends the act, or at least approves of it, by his silence, instead of correcting this audacious servant for his insolence. And you, O Lord! you suffered all, in order to expiate the affront which such a wretch as I have offered to the Divine Majesty by my sins. O my Jesus! I thank you. O Eternal Father! pardon me, through the merits of Jesus.

5. The unjust Pontiff then asked him if he were truly the Son of God. 'I adjure thee by the living God to tell us if thou art Christ the Son of God?' (Matt. xxvi. 63.)

Jesus, through respect for the name of God, declared that he was, and immediately Caiphas rent his garments, saying that he had blasphemed, and the multitude cried out, that he deserved death. 'But they answering, said: he is guilty of death' Yes, O my Jesus! it was with good reason they said you deserved death, for you undertook to make satisfaction for me, who richly merited death. But if by your death you have saved my life, it is just that all my life should be devoted to you, and that I should, if necessary, sacrifice it for your sake. Yes, my Jesus! I do not wish to live any longer for myself, but for you alone, and for your love; come and assist me by your grace.

6. 'Then they spat upon his face, and buffeted him.' (Matt. xxvi.) After having judged him worthy of death, this rabble now looked upon him as a man devoted to punishment, and as one notoriously infamous. Hence, they spent the entire night in ill-treating him. They gave him blows and

kicks, they plucked his beard, they even spat in his face. They derided him as a false Prophet, and said to him: 'Prophesy to us, O Christ! who it is who struck thee.' (Matt. xxvi.) Our Saviour had foretold all this, by the Prophet Isaias. (l. 6.) 'I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them; I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me, and spit upon me.' According to the pious Thauler, it was the opinion of St. Jerome, that all the sufferings and insults which Jesus endured that night, will not be known until the day of general judgment. St. Augustine, speaking of the ignominies suffered by Jesus Christ, says, 'If this remedy does not cure pride, I know not what will do it.' Ah! my Jesus! how is it that you are so humble, and I so proud? O Lord grant me light; make me know what you are, and what I am.

'Then they spat upon his face.' *They spat upon his face!* Oh! my God! what greater outrage is there, than to be insulted

with spittle? It is the last degree of injury to be spit upon, says Origen. Where are we in the habit of spitting but in the most filthy place? And you, my Jesus! you would allow *your face* to be spit upon! This unjust rabble inflict blows upon you; insult you by kicks, cover your face with spittle, do every thing that they please to do, and yet you neither threaten nor reproach them! 'Who, when he was reviled, did not revile; when he suffered, he threatened not, but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly.' (1 Peter ii. 22.) No, but like an innocent lamb, humble and full of meekness, he suffered all without even a murmur, and offered all to his Father to obtain the pardon of our sins. 'He shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth.' (Isaias liii. 7.)

St. Gertrude was one day meditating on the outrages offered to Jesus during his passion, and began to praise and bless him. The Saviour was so pleased, that he condescended to thank her in the tenderest

manner. Oh! my Master! object of so much contempt, you are the King of Heaven, the Son of the Most High. No, you do not deserve to be so cruelly treated and outraged; you deserve the adoration and love of all creatures. I adore you—I bless you—I thank you—I love you with my whole heart—I am grieved for having offended you. Oh! assist me, and have mercy on me.

7. When day appeared, the Jews conducted Jesus to Pilate, in order to have him condemned to death, but Pilate declares him innocent: 'I find no cause in this man.' (Luke xxiii. 4.) In order to be delivered from the importunities of the Jews, who persevered in calling for his death, he sent him to Herod. Herod was greatly pleased to see Jesus Christ before him; for he hoped that in order to save his life, he would perform some of those wonderful prodigies of which he had heard so much report; hence, he put many questions to him. But as Jesus did not wish to be

saved from death, and as this wicked man was unworthy of a reply, he kept silent and returned no answer. Immediately this proud king, with all his court, began to load him with contempt; and clothing him in a white garment, in order to shew that they looked on him as a simpleton and a fool, they sent him back to Pilate. 'And Herod, with his soldiers, despised him, and mocked him, putting on him a white garment, and sent him back to Pilate.' (Luke xxiii. 11.) Cardinal Hugo thus comments on these words: 'They mocked him, as if he were a fool, and clothed him in a white garment.' And St. Bonaventure, 'They despised him as one without power, because he wrought no miracle; as an ignorant man, because he made no reply; as a stupid fool, because he did not defend himself.

O Eternal Wisdom! O Divine Word! the insults of your enemies can reach no farther, since you are now treated as a fool, as one deprived of reason! Your desire for our salvation was then so violent, that

you would for the love of us, not only be the butt of all their ridicule, but even saturated with reproaches, as Jeremy had foretold. (Lament. iii. 30.) 'He shall give his cheek to him that striketh him, he shall be filled with reproaches.' And how could you have so much love for men, from whom you received nothing but ingratitude and contempt? Alas! I am one of those men who offered you more insults than Herod. Ah! my Jesus! do not punish me as you did Herod, by depriving me of the sound of your voice. Herod did not know you to be what you are; but I know and acknowledge you to be my God. Herod did not love you, but I love you more than myself. Ah! do not refuse me the voice of your inspirations, although I have deserved such a punishment by my sins. Tell me what you would wish me to do, for with your grace I am prepared to do every thing.

8. Jesus having been brought back to Pilate, this governor exhibits him to the people, in order to know whether they

would wish to set Jesus free, or Barabbas, a murderer. But the people cried out: 'Not this man, but Barabbas.' Pilate then said to them: 'What shall I do with Jesus?' They replied: 'Let him be crucified.' But what evil has this innocent man committed? They answered: 'Let him be crucified.' (Matt. xxvii.) And yet, O God! even at this day, the greater part of mankind continue to cry out, 'Not this man, but Barabbas;' preferring to Jesus Christ a sensual pleasure, a point of honor, an emotion of wrath.

Ah! my Divine Master! you know well that there was a time when I inflicted the same injury upon you, when I preferred my wicked pleasures to you. My Jesus! pardon me; I am sorry for the past, and for the future I wish to prefer you to every other good. I am resolved to die a thousand times, rather than be separated from you. Grant me holy perseverance; grant me your love.

9. We will speak as we proceed of the

other outrages which our Saviour had to endure, until at length he expired on the cross. 'He endured the cross, despising the shame.' (Heb. xii. 2.) At this moment let us consider how exactly every thing that the Psalmist had predicted of him, was fulfilled in our Saviour—that he was become the reproach of man, and the outcast of the people: 'But I am a worm, and no man; the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people;' (Psalm xxii.) that he died covered with ignominy, tortured by the hand of an executioner, on an infamous gibbet, placed as a malefactor between two thieves: 'And he was reputed with the wicked.' (Isaias liii.)

O most High God! cries out St. Bernard, you have become the last of men! O most powerful! become most miserable! O Glory of Angels! become the reproach of men!

10. O grace! O force of God's love! continues the Saint, is it thus then that the Sovereign Master of all things becomes the

last of all men? 'And who,' adds the Saint, 'accomplished this? Love.' It was the love that God bore to men that effected all this, to show us how much he loved us, and to teach us by his example, to suffer injuries and contempt with patience. 'Christ suffered for us!' says St. Peter, 'leaving you an example, that you may follow his steps.' (ii. 21.) When Saint Elzear was asked by his wife, how he was able to bear with so much resignation the injuries that were done him, he answered in this manner: 'I turn my eyes on Jesus treated with contempt, and I say that the affronts which I meet are nothing, in comparison to those which he, God as he was, endured for me.' Ah! my Jesus! and I, how can I, at the sight of a God thus turned into ridicule for the love of me, refuse to suffer the least contempt for your love? I am a sinner, and yet am proud! Whence, my Divine Master could I have received this pride? Ah! through the merits of the affronts which you have endured for me, grant me

the grace to suffer injuries and insults with patience and joy. I resolve from henceforth, with your assistance, never to yield to resentment, and to receive with joy all the ignominy to which I may be exposed. I have deserved worse contempt, I who have despised your Divine Majesty, and who have merited the contempt of hell. And you, my beloved Redeemer! you have rendered all the insults I receive truly sweet and amiable, by accepting so many insults for my love. I further resolve to do all the good I can to him who shall despise me, or at least to speak well of him and pray for him. And at this moment I beseech you to replenish with graces all those from whom I have received any injury. I love you, infinite goodness! and I wish always to love you as much as I can. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE SCOURGING OF JESUS CHRIST.

1. Let us enter into the hall of Pilate, which was one day the horrible theatre of the ignominies and sufferings of Jesus; let us behold the unjust, disgraceful, and cruel punishment that was there inflicted on the Saviour of the world. Pilate, the unjust judge, seeing that the Jews continued their noisy vociferations against Jesus, condemned him to be scourged. 'Then, therefore, Pilate took Jesus and scourged him.' (John xix. 1.) This iniquitous judge imagined that by this barbarous means, he would move the compassion of his enemies, and thus deliver him from death. 'I will chastise him, therefore,' said he, 'and let him go.' (Luke xxiii. 22.) Scourging was the punishment reserved for slaves. Thus, therefore, says St. Bernard, our amiable Redeemer would

not only take the form of a servant, to be obedient to another's will, but that of a wicked servant, to be chastised by scourges, and thereby suffer the punishment that was due to man, for having become the slave of sin.

O Son of God! O great Lover of my soul! how could you, a God of Infinite Majesty, have loved so vile and ungrateful a being as I am; how could you have loved me so dearly, as to submit to so many tortures, in order to rescue me from the punishments which were due to me? A God scourged! It is much more amazing to behold a God suffering the smallest punishment, than to see all angels and men reduced to annihilation. Ah! my Jesus! pardon the offences which I have committed against you, and afterwards chastise me as you please. I make only one request; that I may love you, and that you may love me, and then I am satisfied to endure all the punishments which you please.

2. Having arrived in the pretor's hall,

our amiable Saviour, according to what was revealed to St. Bridget, stripped himself of his garments at the command of his executioners, embraced the pillar, and then applied his hands to it, in order that they might be tied. O God! already the cruel punishment begins! O angels of heaven! come and be present at this dolorous spectacle; and, if you are not allowed to deliver your King from the barbarous outrage that men are preparing to offer him, come at least to shed tears of sympathy and compassion. And thou, O my soul! do thou imagine that thou art present at this dreadful punishment which is inflicted on thy beloved Redeemer. See how thy suffering Jesus, with his head bent, and his eyes fixed on the earth, awaits this unworthy treatment, all covered with confusion. Behold, how these barbarians, like so many rabid dogs, advance, armed with scourges, on the innocent victim! Behold, how one strikes him on the breast, another on the shoulders, a third on the sides, a fourth on

the legs! what do I say? Not even his sacred head or his beautiful face is spared. Alas! already the divine blood flows down on every side; already the whips, the hands of the executioners, the pillar, and the ground are covered with gore.

Ah! ye cruel men! whom have you got into your hands? Hold, hold, do you know that you are deceived, and that this man whom you are torturing, is an innocent man and a saint? It is I, who am guilty; it is to me, to me who have sinned, that these scourges and punishments are due. But you will not listen to me. O Eternal Father! how can you permit so great an injustice to be done? How can you behold your beloved Son suffering in such a manner, without coming to succor him? What crime has he committed which would deserve so shameful and cruel a punishment?

3. 'On account of the wickedness of my people, I have struck him.' (Isaias liii. 8.) I well know, says the Eternal Father, that my Son is innocent: but since he has un-

dertaken to satisfy my justice for all the sins of men, it is meet that I should thus abandon him to the fury of his enemies. Thus, O my adorable Saviour! you would have your virginal flesh torn and mangled to expiate our sins, and particularly the sins of impurity, which are most common amongst mankind. Who will not here exclaim with St. Bernard, O the unspeakable love of the Son of God towards sinners!

O Jesus! covered with scourges! I thank you for so much love; I am filled with grief when I reflect, that I, by my sins, have assisted in scourging you. Ah! how many years since ought I not have been burning in hell! But why did you wait for me with so much patience up to this hour? You have borne with me, even to the day when overcome by the excess of your love, I should begin to love you, and to avoid sin. My dearly-beloved Redeemer! I will not resist your love any longer—I desire to begin to love you as much as I can. But you already know my weakness,

you know the treachery of which I have been guilty towards you. Extinguish in me all earthly affections, which would prevent me from giving myself entirely to you. Bring frequently to my mind the love which you had for me, and my strong obligation of loving you. I place all my hopes in you, my God! my Love! my All!

4. St. Bonaventure says with a sigh: Already this divine blood flows down on every side—already the sacred body is one entire wound, and yet these savages cease not to add wound to wound, as the Prophet had foretold, 'And they have added to the grief of my wounds.' (Psalm lxviii. 27.) Hence, the stripes not only mangled all parts of the body, but tore off shreds of flesh, which flew to a distance, until at length the flesh was so exposed, that all the bones could be reckoned. Cornelius a Lapide, writing on the twenty-eighth chapter of St. Matthew, says, that according to nature Jesus Christ would have expired under this torment, but he was pleased, by the

power of his Divinity, to preserve his life, in order that he might suffer still greater punishments for the love of us. St. Laurence Justinian had made the same remark before him.

Ah! my tender Master! how richly you deserve an infinite love! You have suffered so much, in order that I might love you. Do not permit, that instead of loving you, I should ever offend or displease you. Alas! should there not be a hell set apart to punish me, if after having known your love for me, I should miserably lose my salvation, in spite of a God, who has been derided, buffeted, and scourged for me, and who likewise so bountifully pardoned me, after having offended him so many times? Ah! my Jesus! do not permit it—for, O my God! the love and patience which you have manifested towards me, would be to me a hell, much more terrible than hell itself.

5. This punishment of scourging, was one of the most cruel that could be inflicted

on our Redeemer, particularly when we consider, that the wretches who scourged him were most numerous. According to the revelation made to St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, they amounted to sixty. Now these were urged by the instigation of the devils, and still more by the priests, who feared that Pilate would, after this torture, set him at liberty, according to his promise: 'I will chastise him therefore and let him go;' they were urged, I say, to scourge him in such a manner as to cause his death. Nay, more, all the Doctors assert with St. Bonaventure, that they sought for the most barbarous instruments at this execution; so that each stroke made a wound, according to St. Anselm; and, that these wounds amounted to many thousands. For they scourged him, as Father Crasset writes, not after the manner of the Hebrews, but according to the custom of the Romans. 'The latter had no fixed number of stripes, whilst the former were forbidden by the Lord himself to inflict more than forty; 'Let stripes not

exceed the number of forty, lest thy brother depart shamefully torn before thy eyes.' (Deuteron. xxv. 3.)

The historian, Josephus, himself, who flourished a short time after our Saviour, relates, that Jesus was so cruelly mangled by this scourging, that his sides were laid bare. The very same was revealed to St. Bridget by the Blessed Virgin, who said to her, 'I, who stood near, saw his body scourged, until the ribs were laid bare; and what was more afflicting, when the whips were withdrawn, they tore the flesh away with them.' Jesus scourged, appeared to St. Teresa, and as she wished that he should be represented exactly as she had seen him, she desired the artist to paint a great piece of flesh hanging down on the left side. He asked her in what shape he should represent it, when upon turning round to his picture he found the piece of flesh already finished. O my beloved, my adorable Jesus! how much have you not suffered for the love of me! Ah! let not

so many sufferings be endured, or so much blood shed for me in vain!

6. But it would be easy to prove from the scriptures alone, how inhuman the scourging was, which Christ received. For why, in reality, did Pilate, after he was scourged, exhibit him to the people, and say: 'Behold the Man,' unless it was, that our Saviour was reduced to so deplorable a condition, he believed his very enemies would be moved at the sight, and would no longer cry out for his death? Why did the women of Jerusalem follow him on his journey to Calvary in tears and lamentations? 'And there followed him a great multitude of people and of women, who bewailed and lamented him.' (Luke xxiii. 27.) Perhaps it was, because these women were interested in his favor, and believed him to be innocent! No; these women generally followed the opinions of their husbands, and therefore, believed him to be guilty. But, because Jesus after having been scourged, was so pitiable an object to

look upon, that he excited compassion even in those who hated him: this was the reason why these women of Jerusalem poured forth their sighs and tears. For what reason, again, did the Jews take the cross from his shoulders and give it to be carried by Simon the Cyrenean, according to the most probable opinion, which is so clearly founded on the words of St. Matthew and St. Luke. 'Him they forced to take up his cross.' (Matt. xxvii. 32.) 'And they laid the cross on him to carry after Jesus.' (Luke xxiii. 26.) Perhaps it was because they had compassion on him, and wished to mitigate his sufferings! No such thing; these wicked men hated him, and endeavored to make him suffer as much as they could. But as B. Denis the Carthusian, says, in his comment on this chapter of St. Luke, they feared he should die on the way. They saw that when he was scourged, our Saviour had lost nearly all his blood; that his strength was so exhausted he could no longer stand on his

feet; that he was constantly falling on the road under the weight of the cross, and that at each step he was on the point of giving up the ghost. Therefore, they compelled Simon the Cyrenean, to carry his cross, in order, that they might be able to bring him alive to Calvary, to behold him die upon the cross, and thereby consign his name to eternal infamy. 'Let us root him out,' said they, according to the prediction of the Prophet, 'from the land of the living, and let his name be not remembered any more.' (Jer. xi. 19.)

Ah! O Lord! my joy is great when I reflect how much you have loved me, when I consider that at this very moment you have the same love for me that you had at the time of your Passion! But, how excessive is my grief when I think that I have so often offended so good a God! I ask your forgiveness, O my Jesus! through the merits of your scourges. I detest sin more than every other evil, and I am resolved to die rather than offend you again. Forgive me

all the injuries which I have done you; and grant me the grace to love you without ceasing for the time to come.

7. The Prophet Isaias has most clearly described to us, that most lamentable of all conditions to which he foresaw our Saviour would be reduced. He says, that by the torments of his Passion, his most holy flesh was not only mangled, but even broken into small pieces. 'But he was wounded for our iniquities, and was bruised to pieces for our sins.' (Isaias liii.) Because, adds the same Prophet, the Eternal Father would not be content until he had seen his Son broken in pieces, and on the point of expiring under his wounds, in order to make him the fullest satisfaction, and to convince mankind of the enormity of sin. 'And the Lord was pleased to bruise him in infirmity,' (v. 10.) so that the body of Jesus became like that of a leper, covered over with wounds from head to foot.

O Jesus! covered with wounds! behold the state to which our iniquities have re-

duced you! says St. Bernard. May your immense charity be for ever blessed, and may you yourself be as much loved as you deserve, by all sinners, and by me in particular, who have despised you more than others!

8. Jesus, scourged, appeared one day to sister Victoria Angelini, and shewed her his body all mangled. 'All these wounds,' said he to her, 'demand your love.' St. Augustine says in the most loving manner, 'Let us love the bridegroom, and the more deformed he appears to us, the more agreeable and beautiful has he become in the eyes of the spouse.' Yes, my sweet Saviour! I behold you covered all over with wounds, I see your beautiful countenance; but, O God! it no longer seems beautiful, but full of horror: it is quite livid and distained with blood and spittle! 'There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness, and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness.' (Isaias liii. 2.) But the more disfigured I behold you, O Lord! the more beautiful and lovely

you appear in my eyes. And, in reality, what is it that disfigures you but the marks of your tender love for me?

I love you, O Jesus! covered with wounds, and mangled for the love of me; I desire to see myself mangled for you, like so many martyrs who have enjoyed this happiness. But if I cannot now offer you my wounds and my blood, I offer you at least all the contradictions that shall befall me; I offer you my heart, and I desire to love you as dearly as I can. And what is there that my soul ought to love with more tenderness, than a God scourged and drained of his blood for me? I love you, O God of love! I love you, infinite goodness! I love you, my Love, my All! I love you, and I desire to repeat without ceasing in this life and the next; I love you, I love you. Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE CROWN OF THORNS.

1. Whilst, the soldiers continued to scourge the innocent Lamb, notwithstanding his deplorable condition, it is related, that one of the bystanders had the courage to advance and say to them: You have no authority to kill this man, although it seems you have the intention; and he immediately cut asunder the bands by which our Saviour was tied. This circumstance was revealed to St. Bridget.

But scarcely had they done scourging him when these barbarous executioners, urged by the instigations, and corrupted by the money of the Jews, as St. Chrysostom assures us, made our Saviour endure a torment of another description. 'Then the soldiers of the governor taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the

whole band. And stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him; and platting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand.' (Matt. xxvii.) Behold then, how the soldiers strip off his garments again, how they treat him like a mock king, throwing over his shoulders a purple garment, which was nothing but a torn rag of a cloak which the Roman soldiers wore, called a *chlamys*, putting into his hand a reed in place of a sceptre, and a wreath of thorns on his head by way of a crown.

Ah! my Jesus! are you not the true King of heaven and earth? And how is it that you have become a King of sorrows and ignominy? Behold then to what love has reduced you! O God of infinite loveliness! when will the day arrive that I shall be united to you in such a manner, that nothing can separate me from you, and that I may no longer have it in my power to cease loving you? Alas! O Lord! as long as I live upon this earth, I am always in danger

of forsaking you, and of refusing you my love, as I have unhappily done during the time that has passed. Ah! my Jesus! if you see that by remaining alive, I should again fall into this dreadful misfortune, strike me dead at this moment, as I trust I am in your grace. I conjure you, by your Passion, not to let me run the chance of so great an evil. I would indeed deserve it on account of my sins, but you do not deserve it; choose some other punishment for me except this. No, my Jesus! my Jesus! I wish never more to see myself separated from you.

2. 'And platting a crown of thorns, they put it on his head.' (Matt. ibid.) The devout Lansperg very justly observes, that the punishment caused by these thorns was excessively painful, because they pierced in every direction the sacred head of the Lord, which is the most sensible part, as all the nerves, and sensations proceed from it, and because this torture was the longest of his Passion, as Jesus wore even to his death,

those cruel thorns which were buried in his head. Every time that these thorns on his head were touched, the pain was renewed. According to the common opinion of authors, and particularly St. Vincent Ferrer, this crown was composed of many branches of thorns, so interwoven, and disposed in the form of network, that as it was revealed to St. Bridget, it covered the entire head, and descended even to the middle of the forehead. St. Laurence Justinian, and St. Peter Damian says, that the points of those thorns were so long, that they even perforated the brain; and this Lamb full of meekness allowed them to torment him as they pleased, without saying one word or uttering one cry. He closed his eyes from the excessive pain, and frequently sent forth heavy sighs, like a man in torture who is about to breathe his last, as it was revealed to the B. Agatha of the Cross. The quantity of blood that flowed from his head was so great, that his countenance appeared all bloody, according to the revelation of

St. Bridget. And St. Bonaventure adds, that it was no longer the beautiful face of the Lord Jesus, but that of a man flayed alive.

O divine love! cries out Salvian, I know not whether I shall call you sweet or cruel, for you seem to be both. Ah yes, my Jesus! love has made you for our sake sweetness itself, since, it inflamed you with so passionate a love for our souls—but it has rendered you cruel to yourself in making you suffer such frightful torments. You would be crowned with thorns, in order to obtain for us a crown of glory in heaven, says B. Denis the Carthusian. O my most sweet Saviour! I hope to be crowned by you in paradise after having been saved through the merits of your sufferings. There I will bless for ever your mercies and your love.

3. Ah! cruel thorns! Ungrateful creatures why do you thus torment your Creator? But why make these reproaches to the thorns? says St. Augustine. They

were but innocent instruments; our sins—our evil thoughts—these are the cursed thorns that pierced the head of Jesus Christ. Jesus, crowned with thorns, having one day appeared to St. Teresa, she began to sympathize in his sufferings, but the Lord said to her, Teresa do not weep on account of the wounds which were inflicted on me by the thorns of the Jews, but rather lament those wounds which I receive from the sins of Christians.

O my soul! thou too hast tormented the venerable head of my Redeemer by so many evil thoughts to which thou hast consented. 'Know and see that it is an evil and cruel thing for thee to have abandoned the Lord thy God.' (1 Jerem. ii. 19.) Open now thy eyes and see, and bitterly bewail for the remainder of thy life, the evil which thou hast committed in so ungratefully abandoning thy Lord and thy God. Ah! my Jesus! you little deserved to be treated by me as I have treated you! I have done evil; I have deceived myself.

My heart is supremely grieved for it. Pardon me, and grant me such a sorrow as will make me weep all my life for my injustice towards you. My Jesus! my Jesus! forgive me, for I desire always to love you.

4. 'And kneeling down before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail King of the Jews; and spitting upon him, they took a reed, and struck his head.' (Matt. xxvii.) St. John adds: 'And they gave him blows.' (xix.) After these barbarians had fastened this cruel crown on the head of Jesus, it was not sufficient for them to press it down most violently with their hands, but they took a reed, in order to hammer in the thorns. Then they began to deride him, as a mock-king; to bend the knee before him, and salute him as King of the Jews; and wnen they arose, they spat on his face, and gave him blows, accompanied by hootings and derisive laughter. O my Jesus! to what then are you reduced? If, at this moment, any one had passed by accident through the place, and beheld Jesus Christ

exhausted of his blood and his strength, covered with his purple rag, the sceptre in his hand, and that crown on his head, buffeted and abused by this rabble, would he not have taken him to be the most vile and wicked wretch on the face of the earth? Behold the Son of God! now become the laughing-stock of Jerusalem! O men! cries out blessed Denis the Carthusian, on this subject, if we will not love Jesus Christ because he is good, and because he is God, let us love him, at least, on account of all the sufferings he has endured for us. Ah! my tender Saviour! receive a rebellious servant, who has abandoned you, but who now sincerely repents and returns to you. When I fled from you, and despised your love, you did not cease to follow me, in order to attract me. This is what gives me reason to hope, that you will not reject me now, when I seek you, when I esteem and love you more than all things. Make me know what I have to do to please you; for I am ready to do every thing. O God!

who art love itself, I wish to love you truly, and I wish never to offend you again. Grant me the assistance of your grace, and do not permit me ever to abandon you. Mary! my hope! pray to Jesus for me. Amen.

CHAPTER X.

BEHOLD THE MAN.

1. PILATE seeing our Saviour reduced to so pitiable a condition, imagined that a sight of him would cause the Jews to relent. He therefore led him to a kind of balcony, raised the purple rag that covered him, and shewing to the people the body of Jesus, said to them, BEHOLD THE MAN! 'Pilate again went out and said to them: Lo, I bring him out before you, that you may know I find no cause in him. Jesus therefore went out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment, and he said

to them: Behold the Man!' (John xix.) *Behold the Man!* As if he would have said: Behold the Man whom you have accused before me, and who affected to make himself a King. In order to gratify you I have sentenced him, although innocent, to be scourged. Behold him in such a state, that he seems to have been flayed alive, and to be very near his last end. If, notwithstanding all this, you pretend that I ought to condemn him to death, I tell you, that I can do no such thing, because I can see no reason for condemning him. But the Jews were only made more furious at the sight of Jesus in that cruel state. 'When therefore the chief priests and attendants had seen him, they cried out, saying: Crucify him.' (John xix.) But when he saw that it was of no avail, Pilate washed his hands in the sight of the people, saying: 'I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it.' And they answered: 'Let his blood be upon us and upon our children.' (Matt. xxvii.)

O my dearly-beloved Jesus! you are the greatest of all Kings, but I now behold you the most unworthily abused of all men. If this ungrateful people knew you not, I at least know you, and I adore you as my true King and Lord. I thank you, O my Redeemer! for all the outrages you have endured for me, and I beseech you to give me a love for contempt and sufferings, since you have embraced them with so much ardor. I blush for having hitherto loved creatures and pleasures so foolishly, as often to renounce your love and grace for their sake. I am more grieved for it than for any other evil, and I embrace, O Lord! all the crosses and affronts which will come to me from your hand. Give me that resignation of which I stand in need. I love you, my Jesus! my Love! and my All!

2. But whilst Pilate was thus exhibiting Jesus to the people from the summit of the gallery, at the same moment the Eternal Father from the highest heavens was also shewing us his well-beloved Son, and say-

ing, in like manner: 'Behold the man!' Behold this man who is my only Son, and whom I love, as I love myself. Behold the Man, your Saviour, so often promised by me, and so impatiently expected by you. Behold the Man, the most noble of all men, now become a man of sorrows. Behold him—see to what a lamentable state he is reduced for the love of you, and in order to be, at least through compassion, loved by you. Do behold him, and love him; and if his divine qualities fail to move you, let, at least, the pains and ignominies he has endured for you, excite you to love him.

Ah! my God, and Father of my Redeemer! I love your Son who has suffered for the love of me; and I love you—you who with so much love abandoned him to so many sufferings for me. I conjure you not to look upon my sins, by which I have so often offended you and your Son. 'Look on the face of your Christ.' Look on your only Son, covered with wounds and with opprobrium, to expiate my iniquities, and

in the name of his merits pardon me, and permit me not to offend you any more. 'Let his blood be upon us.' Let the blood of this Man, who is so dear to you, who prays for us, and asks your mercy in our behalf, let it descend upon our souls, and obtain for us your grace. O my Lord! and my God! I detest all the offences I have given you, and I love you, infinite goodness! more than myself. Through the love of your Son, grant me your love, in order, that I may triumph over all my passions, and endure every kind of punishment for the purpose of pleasing you.

3. 'Come forth ye daughters of Sion, and behold King Solomon in the diadem with which his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the joy of his heart.' (Cant. iii. 11.) Come forth ye redeemed souls, ye daughters of grace; come forth to see your King full of meekness, on the day of his death; the day of his joy; for he has made you his spouses by giving his life for you on the cross.

See him crowned by the ungrateful synagogue, his Mother, not with a crown of glory, but with one of ignominies and sorrows. 'Come forth,' says St. Bernard, 'and behold your King in a crown of poverty and misery.' (Serm. 3, on the Epiphany.) O most beautiful of men! O greatest of all monarchs! O most lovely of all spouses! why do I behold you covered with wounds and opprobrium? You are a spouse, but it is a spouse of blood: since it was by means of your blood and your death you wished to espouse our souls. You are a King, but it is a king of suffering and of love; since you desired by the force of your torments to gain our love.

O dearly-beloved spouse of my soul! may I ever remember all that you have suffered for me; so that I may never cease to love you, and please you! Take pity on me who have cost you so much. In return for all you have endured for me, you only ask my love. Yes; I love you, infinite goodness! I love you more than all things,

and yet I love you too little. My dearly-beloved Jesus! give me more love if you wish to be better loved. I desire to love you much. Miserable sinner that I am, I ought to have been burning in hell from the very first moment I mortally offended you; but you have borne with me up to this hour, because you wished I should burn with the happy flames of your love, rather than in the miserable flames of hell. This thought, O God of my soul! sets me all on fire with the desire of doing every thing that I can to please you. Assist me, my Jesus! and since you have already done so much, accomplish your work, and make me be entirely yours.

4. Notwithstanding his appeal to their feelings, the Jews continued to insult the governor, crying out, 'Away with him. Away with him. Crucify him.' Pilate said to them: 'Shall I crucify your King?' And they answered 'we have no king but Cæsar.' (John xix.) Worldlings who love the riches, honors, and pleasures of the

earth, refuse to acknowledge Jesus as their King; because Jesus on this earth was a king only of poverty, humiliations, and sorrows. But, if they renounce you, O my Jesus! we will choose you for our only King, and we protest, that we will have no other King but Jesus! *We have no King but Jesus.* Yes, amiable Saviour! you are *my* King. You are, and you always will be my only Master.

It is with great justice you are the true King of our souls, since you have created us, and redeemed us from the slavery of Lucifer. *May thy kingdom come.* Always rule and govern, therefore, in our poor hearts. May they always serve and obey you. Let others serve the monarch, of the earth, in hopes of obtaining worldly recompense; but we, we wish to serve no one but you, our suffering and despised King; purely in the hope of pleasing you, without any earthly consolation. Henceforth, sufferings and contempt will be dear to us, since you wished to endure so great a number for the love of us. We,

therefore, conjure you to grant us the grace of being faithful to you; and for this purpose bestow us the great gift of your love. If we really love you, we will also love the contempt and sufferings which you have loved so much; and we should not ask you for any thing, but what your faithful and devout servant St. John of the Cross prayed for. *Lord! may I suffer, and be despised for you. Lord! may I suffer, and be despised for your sake.* Mary! my mother, intercede for us. Amen.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE CONDEMNATION OF JESUS, AND HIS PAINFUL JOURNEY TO CALVARY.

1. PILATE continued to remonstrate with the Jews, saying, that he could not condemn this innocent man to death; but they closed his lips by this one expression, *If you let him escape you are no friend to*

Cæsar. It was thus this unhappy judge, blinded by the fear of losing the friendship of Cæsar, was at length induced to sentence to the death of the cross, him whom he knew, and had so often declared to be innocent. 'Then he delivered him to them that he should be crucified.' (John xix. 16.) And here St. Bernard says with a sigh, 'What crime have you committed, my most innocent Jesus! to deserve such a sentence, to merit the death of the cross?' 'Ah,' replies the saint, 'I know well the cause of your death. I know the crime that you have committed. Your crime is the too great love that you have for men; it is not Pilate, but this that condemns you to die.' 'No;' adds St. Bonaventure, 'I cannot see any other reason for your death, O my Jesus! but your exceeding love for us.' 'Ah! does not such an excess of love,' continues St. Bernard, 'urge us to consecrate all the affections of our hearts to you, O God of love!' O my tender Saviour! this only reflection—*that you have loved me*,

ought to have made me forget every thing else, and think but of loving you and pleasing you in every thing. '*Love is strong as death.*' If love be as strong as death, deign to give me, O my Master! in the name of your merits, such a love for you, as will make me hold in abomination all earthly loves. Make me understand, that all my bliss consists in pleasing you, God of all bounty, and of all love! Cursed be the time in which I did not love you. I thank you for having given me time to love you. I love you, my Jesus! infinitely amiable, and infinitely loving; I love you with my entire affections, and I promise you, that I would rather die a thousand times than ever cease to love you.

2. The unjust sentence of death on the condemned Jesus is read. He hears it and receives it without emotion. He does not complain of the injustice of the judge; he does not appeal to Cæsar as St. Paul did; but full of sweetness and resignation, he submits to the order of the Eternal Father,

who condemned him to the cross for our sins. 'He humbled himself, having been made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,' (Philip. ii. 8.) and on account of the love he bore to men, he rejoiced to die for us. 'He loved us and delivered himself up for us. (Ephes. v.)

O my compassionate Redeemer! how much do I thank you! how much do I not owe you! I desire, my Jesus! to die for you, who with so much love accepted death for my sake. But if I be not permitted to give you my blood and my life, by the hands of the executioner, as the martyrs did; I, at least, accept with resignation, the death which awaits me; and I accept it in whatever manner, at whatsoever time is most pleasing to you. I offer it to you at this moment, as a homage to your majesty, and as an atonement for my sins; and I beseech you, by the merits of your death, to grant me the happiness of dying in your love, and in your grace.

3. Pilate delivers the innocent Lamb to

these furious wolves, to do with him whatsoever they pleased. 'But he delivered up Jesus to their will.' (Luke xxiii.) The executioners seized him with violence, tore the purple rag from his shoulders by the advice of the Jews, and put on his garments. 'They stripped him of the cloak and put on his garments, and they led him forth to be crucified.' (Matt. xxvii.) And they did this, says St. Ambrose, in order that Jesus might be known, at least, by his garments, for his beautiful countenance was so disfigured by the blood and wounds, that it would have been difficult to recognize him without his own clothes. Then they took two pieces of coarse wood, of which they hastily formed a cross of about fifteen feet in length, according to the testimony of St. Bonaventure and Anselm, and they placed it on the shoulders of the Saviour. But Jesus did not wait, says St. Thomas of Villanova, until the cross was placed by the executioner upon him; he took it himself with his own hands, and joyfully placed it on his wound-

ed shoulders. Come, said he then, come thou dear cross, I have sighed after thee and sought thee for the long space of thirty-three years. I now embrace thee; I press thee to my heart, since thou art the altar on which I have resolved to sacrifice my life for my sheep.

Ah! my Lord! how could you render so much good to him who has committed so much evil against you! O God! when I reflect that you have even consented to die in the midst of torments to procure me the friendship of God, and that after all this, I have, notwithstanding, lost it so many times through my own fault, I am ready to die with grief. How often have you not forgiven me, and how often have I not begun to offend you again? How could I hope for pardon, unless I knew that you died in order to pardon me. I, therefore, hope for pardon and perseverance in your love, through this death which you have suffered for me. I repent, my Saviour! for having offended you. In the name of your merits

forgive me, and I promise to displease you no more. I esteem and love your friendship more than all worldly goods. Ah! suffer me not to lose it again; inflict on me, O Lord! every other chastisement rather than this. My Jesus! I do not wish to lose you any more: I would rather lose my life. I wish always to love you.

4. Justice goes out with the condemned, and in the middle of these latter, the King of Heaven, the only Son of God, advances to death under the weight of his cross. 'And carrying his cross he went forth to the place that is called Calvary.' (John xix.) Do you likewise, ye blessed Seraphim, come out of Paradise; come and accompany your Lord who is going to Calvary, in order to be crucified there, between two malefactors on an infamous gibbet.

O the dreadful spectacle! A God crucified! Behold the Messiah, who a few days before had been proclaimed the Saviour of the world, and received with the applause and benedictions of the people, who cried

out, 'Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' (Luke xxi.) We may now behold him walking along, bound, ill-treated and cursed by the whole multitude, with a cross on his shoulders, and going to die like a malefactor! O excess of divine love! A God suffering death for men! *And shall there be found a man who will not love this God!* O eternal love of my soul, too late have I begun to love you! Grant, that during the remainder of my life I may redeem the time that is passed. I know beforehand, that every thing I can do will be little, in comparison of the love which you bore me; but, at least, I desire to love you with all my heart. The injury which I should inflict on you would be too great, if after such an excess of love on your part, I should divide my heart, and bestow a part of it on any object but you. I consecrate to you from this moment all my life, my will, my liberty; dispose of me as you please. I ask heaven of you, in order that I may there love you

with all my strength. I wish to love you in this life, in order that I may love you more during eternity. Assist me by your grace, I implore this favor, and hope to obtain it through your merits.

5. Imagine, my soul! that you behold Jesus passing on this painful journey. Your beloved Redeemer is led to death, as a lamb is carried to the slaughter. 'He shall be led like a lamb to the slaughter.' (Isaias liii.) He is so exhausted from loss of blood, and so weakened from suffering, that he is scarcely able to keep on his feet. Behold him all mangled with wounds, with the wreath of thorns on his head, with a heavy cross on his shoulders, and with an executioner who drags him along by a cord. See how he walks with his body bent, his knees tottering; he streams with blood, and advances with so much difficulty and pain, that every moment seems to be his last.

Say to him then; O Divine Lamb! are you not already overwhelmed with sufferings? If by them you want to gain my love, ah!

do not desire to suffer any more, for I wish to love you according to your desire. No; he answers you, I am not even yet satisfied, neither will I be satisfied until I die for the love of you. And whither are you going now, O my Jesus! I go, he replies, to die for you: do not prevent me. I only ask and recommend one thing; when you shall see me dead upon the cross for your sake, remember the love which I have borne you; remember it, and love me.

O my Lord! in what a condition do I behold you! How dearly has it not cost you to make me comprehend the love you had for me? But of what advantage could my love be to you, that you wished to obtain it by the sacrifice of your blood, and your life? And how, also, could I, although favored by such love, have lived so long a time without loving you, and in forgetfulness of your bounty? I thank you for now giving me light to discern the extent of your love for me. I love you, infinite goodness! more than every other good; I

would even wish to lay down a thousand lives for you, since you desired to sacrifice your divine life for me. I beseech you, in order that I may love you, to grant me those graces which you have merited for me by so many sufferings. Give me that sacred fire which you came to enkindle upon earth by dying for us. Frequently bring your death to my remembrance, in order that I may never forget to love you.

6. 'His government is upon his shoulder.' (Isaias ix. 6.) The cross, says Tertullian, is the noble instrument by which Jesus Christ has made the conquest of so many souls, because, by dying upon it for our sakes, he has expiated our sins, delivered us from hell, and made us his own: 'Who himself bore our sins in his body upon the tree.' (1 Pet. ii.) If, therefore, O my Jesus! God hath charged you with all the sins of men, ('He hath placed upon him the iniquity of us all.' (Isaias liii.) I have by my sins rendered more heavy the burden of that cross which you bore to Calvary.

Ah! my most sweet Saviour! already had you foreseen all the injuries which I was to inflict upon you, and yet you did not cease to love me, and prepare for me those infinite mercies with which you have since favored me. If then I have been dear to you; I, the most vile and ungrateful of sinners, I, who have so often offended you, it is surely just that in return you should be most dear to me, you my God! infinite beauty and goodness! you, who have loved me so much. Ah! would that I had never offended you! Now I know, my Jesus! the outrage I have committed against you. O cursed sins! what have you done! you have made me wound the heart of my Redeemer, which is so tender, that heart which has loved me so much. O my Jesus! pardon me, because I am sorry for having despised you: in future you shall be the only object of my love—I love you, O God of infinite loveliness! with my whole heart, and am resolved to love nothing but you. Lord! give me your love, and I ask no

more. Give me your love alone, I say to you with St. Ignatius, together with your grace, and I am rich enough.

7. 'If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and follow me.' (Matt. xvi. 2.) Since, therefore, O my Redeemer! you who are innocent, go before me with your cross, and invite me to follow you with mine, I do not wish to suffer you to proceed alone. If during the past I have refused to follow you, I confess that I have done wrong. Give me now whatever cross you please; I embrace it, whatsoever it may be, and with it I desire to accompany you even to death. 'Let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach.' (Heb. xiii.) And how, O Lord! can we refuse loving crosses and insults for the love of you, since you have loved them so much for our salvation?

Now, as you invite us to follow you, we will—yes, we will follow you, and die with you. But give us the necessary strength. This strength we implore and

hope for, through your merits. I love you, O my Jesus! you who are worthy of infinite love. I wish to love you with my whole soul, and I desire never to abandon you. Too long have I strayed away from you; fasten me now to your cross. If I have despised your friendship, I repent of it from my whole heart, and I esteem it now more than all other good.

Ah! my Jesus! and who am I, that you would wish to make me your disciple, and command me to love, and even threaten me *with hell*, if I refuse! But why, I shall say to you, with St. Augustine, threaten me with eternal punishments? Ah! what greater punishment could there be, than not to love you, O God! infinitely amiable, my Creator! my Redeemer! my Paradise! my All! I see that by a just chastisement for my offences, I have deserved to be condemned to the impossibility of loving you any more. But since you still love me, continue to command me to love you, and repeat without ceasing, to the ear of my

heart: '*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and thy whole soul, and thy whole mind.*' I thank you, O my Love! for this sweet commandment: and in order to obey you, I love you with my whole heart, with my whole soul, and with all my strength. I am sorry for not having hitherto loved you. At this moment I prefer any other punishment to that of existing without loving you, and I resolve for ever to seek your love in all things. Assist me, my Jesus! that I may make acts of your love all my life, and that I may depart from this world by an act of love, in order that I may hasten to see you face to face in Paradise, where I shall love you entirely, and without interruption, with my whole strength, and during all eternity. O Mother of my God! pray for me. Amen.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS.

1. Behold us now at the Crucifixion, at the last torment, which caused the death of Jesus Christ; behold we are at Calvary, which is now become the theatre of divine love, where a God loses his life in an ocean of sorrows. 'And after they came to the place that is called Calvary, there they crucified him.' (Luke xxiii.) The Lord having with great difficulty reached the foot of the mountain alive, they violently tear off, for the third time, his garments, which were sticking to his bloody wounds, and they fling him on the cross. The Lamb of God stretches himself out on his bed of pain: presents his hands and feet to be nailed by the executioners, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, offers to his Eternal Father the great sacrifice of his life, for the salvation of men. When one hand had been nailed,

the tendons shrunk back, and hence it became necessary, as it was revealed to St. Bridget, to draw the other hand violently with cords, and likewise the feet, to the place where they were to be nailed; and such was the force with which they were pulled, that the nerves and veins were distended, and burst with dreadful pain. Thus all his bones might be reckoned, as David had foretold. 'They have dug my hands and my feet, they have numbered all my bones.' (Psalm xxi.)

Ah! my Jesus! what was it that nailed your hands and feet to this gibbet, but your love for men? By the pains of your transpierced hands, you wished to expiate the sins which men have committed by their touch; and by the torments of your feet, you would expiate every step of ours, when we hastened to offend you. O my Crucified Love! bless me with those wounded hands. Nail this ungrateful heart to your feet, that I may never more be separated from you. May this will which has so often revolted

against you, be fastened to your cross, and remain immovable in presence of your love. Grant that nothing may move me but your love, and the desire of pleasing you. Although I behold you suspended on this gibbet, I recognize you to be the Master of the world, the true Son of God, and the Saviour of men. For pity's sake, my Jesus! do not abandon me during my whole life, and particularly at the hour of my death. In this last agony; at this last combat against Lucifer, assist me yourself, and enable me to die in your love. I love you, O my Crucified Love! I love you with my whole heart.

2. St. Augustine says, that there is no kind of death more cruel than the death of the cross: because, as St. Thomas remarks, (Tract 36, in Joan.) those that are crucified have their hands and feet pierced, which parts of the body being entirely composed of nerves, muscles, and veins, are exquisitely sensible to pain; and also, because the very weight of the body which is sus-

pended, makes the pain continual, and goes on increasing until death. But the pains of Jesus exceeded all other torments; for says the Angelic Doctor, the body of Jesus Christ was perfectly formed, and was therefore more sensible of pain; a body which was prepared by the Holy Ghost for the express purpose of suffering, as the Saviour himself had foretold, according to the declaration of the Apostle: 'But thou hast fitted a body to me.' (Heb. x. 5.) St. Thomas further says, that Jesus Christ wished to suffer so great a torture, that it would be capable of satisfying for all the temporal punishments which are due to the sins of all mankind.

My soul, behold your Saviour; behold your life suspended on this tree. 'And your life will be hanging as it were, before your eyes.' (Deuter. xxviii.) See him on this infamous gibbet, suspended from those cruel hooks; he can find no resting place, nor repose. At one time he supports himself by his hands, at another by his feet; but

how can he support himself, the pain becomes intolerable? He turns his agonizing head now to one side, and then to the other; if he permits it to fall on his chest, his hands, burthened with the weight, are torn afresh; if he leans it on his shoulders, they are pierced by the thorns; if he rests it against the cross for support, the thorns enter still further into his head. Ah! my Jesus! how cruel, indeed, is the death which you are suffering! O my crucified Redeemer! I adore you on this throne of ignominy and sorrow. I see it written on this cross, that you are a King: 'JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS.' But, with the exception of this contemptuous inscription, what mark of your royalty do you show me? Ah! let those nailed hands, that head crowned with thorns, that throne of sufferings, that mangled flesh—let them cause you to be acknowledged as a King —*the King of Love!* I approach, then, humbled and melted with tenderness, to kiss your sacred feet, which are pierced

through for the love of me. I embrace this cross, on which you, the victim of love, would sacrifice yourself to the divine justice for my sake. 'Having been obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' O happy obedience, which has obtained for us the pardon of our sins! O my Saviour! what would become of me, if you had not paid my debt? I thank you, my love, and through the merits of this sublime obedience, I beseech you to grant me the grace of obeying in all things the will of God. I long for heaven only that I may love you for ever, and with all my strength.

3. Behold the King of Heaven, who is about to die, suspended on this gibbet. Let us ask him with the Prophet: 'What are these wounds in the middle of your hands?' (Zach. xiii. 6.) Tell me, my Jesus! what are these wounds in the middle of your hands? The Abbot Rupert answers for Jesus. These are marks of the great love which I have borne you, says the Saviour; this is the price at which I have delivered

you from the hands of your enemies, and from eternal death. Love, then, O faithful soul! love a God, who has loved you so much; and, if you ever doubt of his love, look at this cross, behold these torments and this cruel death which he suffers, says St. Thomas of Villanova; these are the evidences which will make you comprehend how much your Redeemer has loved you. St. Bernard adds, that the cross, that each wound of Jesus cries out to us, that he sincerely loves us.

O my Jesus! in what suffering and sorrow do I behold you? Ah! how bitter a reflection must it not have been to you, that although you were dying in torments on this cross, so small a number of souls would love you after all? O God! how many hearts are there at this moment, which, although consecrated to you, either do not love you at all, or love you too little! Ah! beautiful flame of love? you who consumed the life of a God on the cross, consume me likewise; consume all the disor-

derly affections of my heart, and grant that during all my life, I may neither love nor sigh after any thing but the God who has loved me so much, who was the victim of much suffering, and who would lay down his life for the love of me on an infamous gibbet. My tender Jesus! I desire to love you always, and to love but you alone! you alone! you alone! my Love! my God! my All!

4. 'Thine eyes shall behold thy teacher.' (Isaias xxx. 20.) It was promised to men that they should behold with their own eyes, their Divine Master. The whole life of Jesus was a continual example, and a school of perfection; but at no part of it does he instruct us better in the most sublime virtues than from the lofty pulpit of his cross. Oh! how well he instructs us from thence on patience, and particularly patience during sickness! for Jesus on the cross, suffered with the most perfect patience the torments of his cruel death. From the cross he teaches us by his example an entire

submission to the commands of heaven, a perfect resignation to the will of God; and, above all, he teaches us how we ought to love. Father Paul Segneri, the younger, wrote to one of his penitents, that at the foot of the crucifix were inscribed these words, BEHOLD HOW YOU SHOULD LOVE.

Behold how you should love! This is what our Saviour himself seems to say to all of us from the summit of his cross, when, rather than suffer some pain, we abandon those works that are agreeable to him, and, even sometimes, have the hardihood to renounce his grace and love. As for him, he loved us even until death, and he did not come down from the cross until he had delivered up his life upon it. Ah! my Jesus! you have loved me, even unto death: even unto death also do I desire to love you. Hitherto I have frequently offended and betrayed you: avenge yourself, O Lord! upon me, but let it be with a vengeance of tenderness and love. Grant me such a sorrow for my sins, that I may

always live contrite and afflicted for the displeasure I have given you. Ah! what greater misfortune could happen me than to displease you, my God! my Redeemer! my hope! my treasure! my all!

5. 'And if I shall be exalted from the earth I will draw all things to me. And this he said to signify what death he was to die.' (John xii. 30.) Jesus Christ announced that when he should be raised on the cross he would attract the affections of all souls by his merits, his example, and the force of his love, to use the words of Cornelius a Lapide on this text of St. John. St. Peter Damian had written the same thing. Who, therefore, adds Cornelius a Lapide, who will not love Jesus, who is dying for the love of us? Behold, O ye redeemed souls! says the church to us, behold your Redeemer on this cross, where every thing in him breathes love, and entices you to love; his head inclined to give you the kiss of peace; his arms extended to embrace you; his heart opened to love you.

Ah! my dearly-beloved Jesus! how could my soul be so dear to you, when you foresaw all the injuries you were to receive from me? In order to gain my affection you would give the most extraordinary proofs of love. Come, ye scourges, thorns, nails, and cross, which tormented the sacred body of my Master; come and strike my heart. Recall to my mind every day, that all I have received, and every thing I hope for, are derived from the merits of his Passion. O Master of love! others prove their affection by words! *but you testify your love on this bed of death;* you display it by your sufferings. Others love through interest—but you from pure affection; for you ask no other recompense but my salvation. Save me, my love! and may my salvation consist in always loving you and pleasing you; *to love you is my life!*

6. Whilst Jesus was dying, men did not cease to torment him by sarcasms and reproaches. Some said to him: 'He has saved others, and he cannot now save him-

self;' and others: 'If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross.' And in the midst of these insults what did Jesus on his cross? Perhaps he asks his Eternal Father to punish them? No such thing; he begs their forgiveness. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' (Luke xxiii. 24.) Yes, says St. Thomas, in order to shew the immense love he bore to men, the Saviour asked pardon of God for his own executioners. He asked, and he obtained it; so that after having seen him expire, they repented of their sins. 'They returned, striking their breasts.'

Ah! my tender Saviour! behold me at your feet. I have been one of your most ungrateful persecutors; pray also for me to your Father, that he may forgive me. It is true that the Jews and the executioners who crucified you, knew not what they were doing; but I well knew, that in committing sin, I offended a God who was crucified, and put to death for my sake. But your

blood and your death have merited the divine mercy for me also. I cannot doubt of my pardon, when I behold you die in order to attain it for me. Ah! my Redeemer? look on me with those eyes of love with which you beheld me, when you were dying for me on the cross. Look upon me, and pardon me all the ingratitude with which I have repaid your love. I am sorry, O my Jesus! for having despised you.

I love you with my whole heart, and on account of your example, I also love, because I love you, all those who have offended me. I wish them all manner of blessings. I resolve to assist and succor them as much as I can for the love of you, O Lord! that died for me, who so often offended you.

7. 'Remember me.' Remember me, said the good thief to you, and he deserved to hear from your own mouth this consoling reply: 'This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.' (Luke xxiii.)

Remember me, I say to you also, remember me, O Lord! who am one of those sheep for whom you have laid down your life. Comfort me also, by making me know that my sins are forgiven, and by giving me a great sorrow for them. O great High Priest! who have sacrificed yourself for the love of your creatures, have pity on me. I consecrate to you, from this moment, my will, my senses, my satisfactions, and all my desires. I believe, O my Jesus! that you were crucified, and that you died for me. May your divine blood pour down upon me, I beseech you; may it cleanse me from my sins, may it set my heart on fire with holy love, and make me become entirely yours. I love you, O my Jesus! and I desire to die crucified for you, who were crucified to death for me.

Eternal Father! I have offended you; but behold your Son, who is fastend to this tree, and who makes satisfaction for me, by the sacrifice of his divine life, which he offers you. I offer you his merits, for they are all

mine, since he has bestowed them on me; and through the love of your Son, I conjure you to have mercy on me. The greatest mercy I implore is the gift of your grace, which, miserable wretch that I am, I have so often despised. I am sorry for having offended you, and I love you. I love you, my God! and my All! and in order to please you, I am ready to suffer all manner of opprobium, torments, poverty and death.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS, AND HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS.

1. St. Laurence Justinian says, that the death of Jesus was the most painful and sorrowful that could be endured by man, as our Saviour expired on the cross, without even the smallest comfort. In other sufferers the pain is sometimes mitigated, and is assuaged at least by some consoling re-

flections; but the sorrow and affliction of Jesus in his sufferings was pure, unmingled sorrow, without any alleviation. Hence St. Thomas says, it is by this consideration we should judge of the greatness of Christ's sufferings. It is for the same reason that St. Bernard, contemplating Jesus on the cross, says to him with a sigh, My tender Jesus! when I behold you on this cross, I perceive nothing but pain and grief from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet.

O my sweet Redeemer! O love of my soul! why would you shed all your blood, and sacrifice your divine life for an ungrateful worm of the earth like me? O my Jesus! when shall I be united to you in such a manner, that nothing will ever be able to separate me from you, that nothing will make me cease to love you? Ah! Lord! as long as I live upon this earth I am exposed to the danger of withdrawing my love from you, and of losing your friendship as I have done before. I conjure you,

O my tender Saviour, that if I am ever to fall into so great an evil, I conjure you by your Passion, to strike me dead at this moment: when I hope I am in your grace. I love you, and I wish always to love you.

2. Jesus complains by the mouth of the Prophet, that when he was dying on the cross, he looked for some one to console him, and could find none. 'And I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort me, and I found none.' (Psalm lxviii. 21.) Even at the very moment when he was about to expire, the Jews and Romans launched their curses and blasphemies against him. It is true, that Mary, his tender Mother, remained at the foot of the cross, in order to procure him some comfort, if it were possible; but this tender and afflicted Mother only added to the grief of a Son, who loved her so dearly by the compassionate sorrow which overwhelmed her. St. Bernard positively asserts, that the sorrows of Mary only served to wound

more deeply the heart of Jesus. Thus whenever the Saviour cast his eyes on his afflicted Mother, he felt his heart more pierced by the sorrows of Mary, than by his own, as the Blessed Virgin herself revealed to St. Bridget. Upon which, St. Bernard exclaims: 'O good Jesus! you suffer much in your sacred body, but you suffer more in your heart, from the compassion of your Mother.'

But above all, what sorrow did not fill the affectionate hearts of Jesus and Mary, when the moment arrived when at the point of death he was to take leave of her. Behold the last words in which Jesus bids farewell to his Mother in this world: *Woman, behold thy Son,*' (John xv.) shewing her St. John, whom he left as a son in place of himself.

O Queen of Sorrows! the recommendation of so beloved a Son at the point of death, are too dear to be ever forgotten by a Mother. Remember then, that your Son who loved you so much, has given me to

you as your son, in the person of St. John. In the name of the love which you bear to Jesus, take pity on me. I ask you not for the goods of the earth. I behold your Son dying for me in the midst of much suffering; I behold you, O my Mother! all innocent as you are, enduring likewise the greatest sorrows for me; and I perceive that I, a miserable wretch, who have deserved hell for my sins, have suffered nothing for the love of you. I desire to suffer something for you before I die. I ask this grace, and I say to you with St. Bonaventure, that if I have offended you, it is just that I should suffer punishment, and that if I have served you, it is just I should suffer for a recompense. Obtain for me, O Mary! a great devotion to the Passion of your Son, and a continual remembrance of his sufferings, and through that sorrow which you felt, when you saw your Son expire on the cross, obtain for me a happy death. Assist me, O my Queen! at this last moment, and obtain for me the grace to die in loving and

pronouncing the sacred names of JESUS and MARY.

3. Jesus finding that there was no one on this earth to console him, raises his eyes and his heart towards his Father, to ask comfort from him. But the Eternal Father seeing his Son clad in the garments of a sinner, says to him: No, my Son, I cannot console you, since you are now making atonement to my justice for the sins of all men; it is even just that I should abandon you to your sufferings, and permit you to die without any comfort. It was then our Saviour said with a loud cry, 'My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?' (Mat. xxvii. 46.) Blessed Denis the Carthusian, in his explanation of this passage says, that Jesus cried aloud when he uttered these words, to make us comprehend the excessive pain and profound sorrow in which he was dying. And our beloved Redeemer, adds St. Cyprian, would die deprived of all consolation, in order to exhibit his love for us, and to gain our love in return.

Ah! my tender Jesus! you complained wrongfully when you said: Why, my God, hast thou forsaken me? You, say, why; and I will say to you: Why would you undertake to atone for us? Did you not know that we deserved, for our sins, to be forsaken by God? It is then with justice that your Father has forsaken you, and suffered you to die in an ocean of bitterness and sorrow. Ah! my Saviour! your abandoned state afflicts and consoles me; it afflicts me, because I see you dying a prey to so much torment; but it consoles me, because it gives me reason to hope that, through your merits, I may not be forsaken by the divine mercy, as I have deserved so often for having abandoned you, to follow my own inclinations. Make me comprehend, that if it was so painful to you to be deprived for some moments of the sensible presence of the Divinity, what would be my punishment if I were to be deprived of my God for ever. I conjure you by that cruel abandonment which you endured, not to

forsake me, my Jesus, particularly at the hour of death. Although all should abandon me, let me not be forsaken by you, O my Saviour. O Lord! abandoned by all! I beseech you to become my comfort in my desolation. I am well aware, that if I loved you, *without consolation*, I would give more pleasure to your heart. But you know my weakness; strengthen me by your grace; give me in my last moments perseverance, patience, and resignation.

4. When Jesus was drawing nigh to his end, he said: 'I THIRST.' 'Tell me, Lord, for what do you thirst?' says Leo of Ostia, 'you say nothing of the infinite torments which you are enduring on the cross, and you complain of thirst.' St. Augustine gives this answer for him: Souls! says Jesus, this thirst is nothing but the desire I have for your salvation. Indeed, our Saviour being all inflamed with love, desired with an inconceivable ardor to possess our souls, and hence he burned to give himself entirely to us by his death, says St. Laurence

Justinian. St. Basil of Seleucia, adds, that Jesus Christ used this word, I thirst, to give us to understand, that such was his love for us, he desired to suffer even more than he suffered.

O God of infinite loveliness! you desire that we should thirst after you, because you love us. St. Gregory tells us, that God thirsts, in order that we may thirst for him. Ah! my divine Master! you thirsted for me, a miserable worm, and I have no thirst my God, for you, who are infinite! Give me, I beseech you, through the merits of that thirst, which you suffered for me on the cross, an ardent desire of loving you, and of pleasing you in all things. You have promised to grant us every thing that we ask. 'Ask, and you shall receive.' I only ask of you this grace, the gift of your love. I am unworthy of it; but it will be the glory of your blood to enkindle a special love for yourself, in a heart that has so long and so cruelly despised you, to convert into a furnace of love, a heart that has been all filled

with mire and sin. O Lord! infinitely good, I desire to love you as much as you deserve. I rejoice at the love which the souls of your faithful spouses bear you, and still more at the love which you have for yourself, and to which I unite my own, all feeble as it is. I love you, O Eternal God! I love you, O infinite Love! Grant, that I may incessantly advance in your love, by multiplying acts of love, and by striving to please you in all things, continually, and without reserve. Grant, that all miserable and insignificant as I am, I may at least, be entirely yours.

5. Our Jesus, when he is about to draw his last breath, says with a dying voice, 'IT IS CONSUMMATED.' In pronouncing this word he reviewed in thought the whole course of his life, he saw all the fatigues which he had endured, the poverty, the sorrows, the ignominies which he had suffered, and he offered all anew to his Eternal Father for the salvation of the world. Then turning to us, he repeats, '*It is consum-*

mated ;' as if he had said, O men, all is consummated, all is accomplished, the work of your redemption is achieved, the divine justice is satisfied, heaven is opened. 'And behold thy time is the time of lovers.' (Ezech. xvi.) It is at length time, O men! that you should think of loving me. Love me then; love me, for I could do no more, in order to be loved by you. Behold what I have done to obtain your love. For you I have spent a life filled with so many tribulations. At the close of my days, before I died, I consented to have all my blood drained from me, my face covered with spittle, my body mangled, my head crowned with thorns; in fine, to suffer pains and agonies on this tree, where you behold me. Can I do any more? Yes, one thing remains for me to do, that is, to die for you. Well; *I desire to die.* Come then, O death—I give you permission—do take away my life for the salvation of my flock. And do you, my sheep, love me. Love me; because now I can do no more to gain your love. Whatever justice re-

quired, says the blessed Thauler, whatever charity demanded, whatever demonstration love could exact, all is consummated.

O my dearly-beloved Jesus! if I could also say when I am dying: Lord! all is consummated. I have done every thing that you have commanded me. I have borne my cross with patience. I have endeavored to please you in all things. Ah! my God! if I were now to die, I would die quite displeased with myself, since I would not be able to say all this to you with truth. But, shall I then always live thus ungrateful towards you? I beseech you to grant me the grace of pleasing you during the remainder of my days, so that, when death comes, I may be able to say to you, that at least from this day I have accomplished your holy will. If I have offended you during the past year, your death reanimates me: for the future I am resolved not to betray you. But, I expect perseverance from you alone. I ask and hope for it, O my Jesus! through your merits.

6. Behold Jesus dying; contemplate him, my soul, in the pains of his agony, drawing with difficulty the last breath of life. Behold these dying eyes, this pale visage, this heart, whose feeble beating scarcely indicates palpitation, this body, which is claimed by death, and this beautiful soul on the point of quitting it. Already the heavens are obscured, the earth trembles, the graves are opened. What do these tremendous signs announce? *The death of the Creator of the Universe.*

Our Saviour at length, after having recommended his holy soul to his Eternal Father, heaves a deep sigh from the bottom of his afflicted heart, bows his head in token of obedience, and offering his death for the salvation of mankind, expires through the violence of his sufferings, committing his soul into the hands of his Eternal Father. 'And crying out with a loud voice, he says: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and saying this, he expired.' (Luke xxiii.)

Come, my soul, to the foot of this holy altar, where the Lamb of God dies immolated for you. Draw near, and reflect that he is dead on account of the love which he bore you. Ask every thing that you desire from your departed Saviour, and hope for all. O Saviour of the world! O my Jesus! behold to what you have been reduced by your love for men. I return you thanks, O my God! because you wished to lay down your life that our souls might not be lost. I thank you for all mankind, but particularly for myself. Ah! who has enjoyed the fruit of your death more than I? Through your merits I have been made, even without knowing it, a child of the church in baptism; for the love of you I have been so many times forgiven; and received so many of the choicest graces; through you I expect to die in the grace of God, and to go to love him in heaven.

Dearly-beloved Redeemer! under how many obligations have you not placed me? I commit my poor soul into your trans-

pierced hands. Make me thoroughly understand this excess of love. A GOD HAS DIED FOR ME! O Lord! I wish also to die for you. But what compensation would the death of a guilty slave be for the death of his Master and his God? I desire, at least, to love you with all my strength; but without your assistance, O my Jesus! I can do nothing. Assist me then, and through the merits of your death, make me die to all earthly affections, in order that I may love you alone, who deserve all my love. I love you, infinite bounty; I love you, sovereign good; and I desire with St. Francis, to die in acknowledgment of the infinite love which you bore me in dying for my sake, and in order to gain my love. Mary, my mother! intercede for me.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE MOTIVES WHICH SHOULD INDUCE US TO HOPE IN THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST.

1. Jesus is the only hope of our salvation, besides him there is no salvation in any one else. 'There is no salvation in any other.' (Acts iv.) I am the only door, says he himself to us, and he who enters by me, will certainly find eternal life. 'I am the door, if any one shall enter by me, he will be saved.' (John xix. 9.) What sinner could ever hope for pardon if Jesus had not satisfied the divine justice for us, by his blood and his death? 'He hath borne our iniquities.' (Isaias liii.) This is also the motive which the apostle uses when he says: 'For if the blood of goats and of oxen ..... sanctify such as are defiled to the cleansing of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Holy Ghost, offered himself,

without spot, to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.' (Heb. ix. 13.)

Our amiable Redeemer having come on earth only to save sinners, what did he do when he saw the condemnation which we deserved for our sins had been written against us? He expiated, by his death, the punishment which we deserved, and having effaced with his own blood the act of our condemnation, he himself fastened it to his cross when dying, in order that the divine justice might have no more satisfaction to require from us. 'Blotting out the handwriting of the decree which was against us, which was contrary to us, the same he took out of the way, fastening it to the cross.' (Coloss. ii. 14.)

'Christ entered once into the holy place, having found eternal redemption.' (Heb. vi.) Ah! my Jesus! if you had not found this means of obtaining pardon, who could ever discover it? David had reason to cry out, 'Publish his ways.' (Psalm ix. 12.)

Publish, O ye blessed! the secrets which the love of our God has discovered, in order to save us. Since, therefore, O my sweet Saviour! you have had so much love for me, do not cease to protect me. You have rescued me out of the hands of Lucifer by your death. I commit my soul into your hands; to you it belongs to save it. Into thy hands I commend my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, God of Truth!

2. 'My little children, I write these things to you, that you may not sin; but if any one has sinned, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just, and he is the propitiation for our sins.' (1 John i. 2.) Jesus Christ did not at his death cease to intercede for us to his Eternal Father, even still he is our advocate; and from the expression of the apostle, it would seem, that he has no other function in heaven, but to induce his Father to have mercy on us. 'Always living to make intercession for us.' (Heb. vii.) The apostle adds, that it was for this reason he ascended to

heaven; 'that he may appear now in the presence of God for us.' (Heb. ix.) As rebels are banished from the presence of their king, so, in like manner, we sinners, we would never have been worthy to be admitted to the presence of God, nor even so much as to ask him for pardon. But Jesus, as our Redeemer, presents himself for us before God, and obtains for us, by his merits, the grace which we have forfeited. 'You are come to Jesus the mediator, and to the sprinkling of blood which speaketh better than that of Abel.' (Heb. xii.) Oh! may the blood of the Redeemer cry out for mercy in our behalf, more loudly than that of Abel cried for vengeance against Cain! My justice is changed into clemency, said God to St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, by the vengeance which I have taken on the innocent flesh of Jesus Christ. The blood of my Son does not cry out to me for vengeance like that of Abel; it implores only mercy and compassion, and at the sound of this voice my justice cannot

but be appeased. This blood ties up his hands in such a manner, that he cannot, if we be permitted the expression, make use of them in executing on sin the vengeance which he has determined.

3. 'Forget not the kindness of thy surety, for he hath given his life for thee.' (Eccles. xxix. 19.) Ah! my Jesus! after the commission of sin, I was unable to satisfy the divine justice, but you were pleased by your death to make satisfaction for me. Now, what would not be my ingratitude if I should forget this great mercy? No, my Redeemer! I wish never to forget it. I desire always to thank you, and to testify my acknowledgments by loving you, and doing every thing in my power to please you. Assist me with this grace, which you have merited for me by so many labors. I love you my Jesus! my Love! my Hope!

4. 'Come my dove in the clifts of the rock.' (Cant. ii. 13.) Oh! what an assured refuge will we not always find in those sacred fissures of the rock; that is, in

the wounds of Jesus Christ? The clifts of the rock, says St. Peter Damian, are the wounds of the Redeemer, for in them he has founded our hope. There we shall be relieved from that diffidence which we feel at the sight of our sins; there we shall find weapons of defence when tempted anew to sin. 'Have confidence, I have overcome the world.' (John xvi.) If you be not strong enough, says the Saviour, to resist the assaults of the world which tempts you with its pleasures, have confidence in me, for I have overcome it; and by this means you will overcome it also. Pray to my Eternal Father, that in the name of my merits he may bestow you that strength of which you stand in need; and I promise you, that he will give you every thing you shall ask him in my name. 'Amen, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it you.' (John x. 23.) And in another place he confirmed his promise, by saying, that whatever grace we should ask of God in the name of his

love, he himself, who is consubstantial with the Father, would grant it to us. 'Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' (John xiv. 13.) Ah! Eternal Father! confiding in these merits and promises of Jesus Christ, I do not ask you for the goods of the earth, but only for your grace. It is true, that on account of the outrages I have committed against you, I deserve neither pardon nor grace; but, if I have not deserved them, your Son has merited them for me, by giving his blood and his life for my sake. Pardon me, therefore, through your love for this Son; give me a great sorrow for my sins, and a great love for you. Enlighten me, that I may know the extent of your goodness, and how much you have loved me from all eternity. Make me know your will, and give me strength perfectly to accomplish it. O Lord! I love you, and I desire to do every thing that is pleasing to you.

5. Oh! what a great confidence of salva-

tion has not the death of Jesus Christ given us? 'Who is he that shall condemn? Christ Jesus who died, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?' (Rom. viii.) Who then will condemn us, says the Apostle. It is the very same Redeemer, who lest we should be condemned, has condemned himself to die so painful a death on the cross. Hence, St. Thomas of Villanova draws a most powerful motive to encourage us, when he says, 'sinner, what have you to fear, if you wish to quit sin? How can that God condemn you, who has died, in order that you might not be condemned? How can he reject you, when you return to his feet, he who came down from heaven to seek after you, when you were flying from him.' But our Saviour himself has given us still more powerful motives of confidence, when he said by the mouth of the prophet Isaias: 'Behold, I have graven thee in my hands: thy walls are always before my eyes.' (Is. xlix. 16.) Dear sheep, have confidence;

behold how much you have cost me; I have you written in my hands; in these wounds which I have received for you; they cry out to me without ceasing to assist and defend you against your enemies; love me and have confidence.

Yes, my Jesus! I love you, and I place my confidence in you. To redeem me it has cost you dearly; but to save me costs you nothing. It is your will that all should save themselves, and that no one should be lost through his own fault. If my sins terrify me, your goodness encourages me; for you are more desrous that 1 should do good, than I am to receive it. Ah! my dearly-beloved Redeemer! I shall say to you with Job: 'Although he shall kill me I will trust in him, and he shall be my Saviour.' (Job xiii. 15.) When therefore, O my love! you shall even banish me from your presence, I will not cease to hope in you, who are my Saviour. These wounds, this blood, are most powerful motives to induce me to hope for every kind of good from your

mercy. I love you, O good Jesus! I love you, and I hope in you.

6. The glorious St. Bernard being one day sick, saw himself carried before the tribunal of God, where the devil was accusing him of his sins, and said, that he did not deserve heaven. The saint answered: it is true that I have not deserved heaven, but Jesus has two titles to this kingdom: one, because he is by nature the Son of God—the other because he has conquered you by his death. He is contented with the first, and he has yielded me the second; and it is on this account, I ask and hope for heaven. We can say the same thing, since St. Paul declares, that Jesus Christ wished to die full of sorrows, in order to obtain heaven for all sinners who repent and resolve to amend. 'And being consummated he became the cause of eternal salvation to all that obey him.' (Heb. v. 9.) To which the Apostle adds: 'Let us run to the fight proposed unto us, looking on Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who, having

joy proposed to him, underwent the cross, despising the shame.' (Heb. xii. 1.) Let us go with courage to combat our enemies: with our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ, who offers us through the merits of his Passion, both victory and a crown.

Himself has said, that he has ascended to heaven, in order to prepare a place for us there. 'Let not your heart be troubled, for I go to prepare a place for you.' (John xiv. 1.) He has said, and he continues to say to his Father, that since he has given us to him, he wishes to have us with him in heaven. 'Father, I will that where I am, those that thou hast given me, may also be with me.' (John xvii. 24.) And what greater mercy could we hope for from the Lord, says St. Anselm, than for the Eternal Father to say to a sinner already condemned to the punishments of hell for his sins, without any means of escaping it: *Take my Son and offer him for yourself?* And what greater mercy than for the Son to say: *Take me and deliver yourself from hell?*

Ah! my tender Father! I thank you for having given me this Son as my Saviour. I offer you his death, and I implore your mercy through his merits. To you also, my Redeemer! do I render continual thanks, for having given your blood and your life to deliver me from eternal death. Come, then, and assist your rebellious servants, whom, you have redeemed at so great a price. O Jesus! my only hope, you love me, you are all powerful; make me holy. If I am weak, strengthen me; if I am infirm, on account of my sins, pour out one drop of your blood on my soul, and cure me. Grant me your love and final perseverance, that I may die in your grace. Grant me heaven; I ask and hope for it, in the name of your merits. I love you, infinitely amiable God! with my whole soul, and I hope to love you for ever. Assist a poor sinner, who desires to love you.

'Having, therefore, a great High Priest, who hath penetrated the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a High Priest who cannot

have compassion on our infirmities, but one tempted in all things like as we are, yet without sin.' (Heb. iv. 14.) Since we have, says the Apostle, a Saviour, who has opened paradise for us, that was so long closed against us by sin, let us have an unshaken confidence in his merits; for, as he was pleased in his goodness, to experience our miseries himself, he well knows how to compassionate our evils. 'Let us go, therefore, with confidence to the throne of grace; that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.' (Heb. ibid.) Let us then approach confidently to the throne of the divine mercy, to which we have access through Jesus Christ, that we may there find all those graces of which we stand in need. How can we doubt, says St. Paul, that God has given us all things, in giving us his Son? (Rom. viii. 16.) Cardinal Hugo thus comments on these words: Will he not give us the less good, that is, eternal life, who has bestowed us the greater, namely, his Son?

O my sovereign good! what return can I make you, poor as I am, for this great gift of your Son, which you have bestowed on me? I will say to you with David, 'the Lord will repay for me.' (Psal. 137.) Lord! I have nothing that I could offer you. Your Son can alone worthily thank you, and he has rendered you suitable thanksgiving. O my Father! the most merciful of Fathers! I beseech you to save me, through the wounds of Jesus. I love you, infinite goodness! and because I love you, I am sorry for having offended you. My God! my God! I wish to become entirely yours; receive me for the love of Jesus Christ. Ah! my beneficent Creator! can it be, that after having given me your Son, you would refuse me any of your blessings, your grace, your love, your kingdom?

7. St. Leo assures us, that Jesus Christ has procured us more blessings by his death, than the devil has inflicted evil by the sin of Adam. This is what the Apostle clearly expresses in his Epistle to the Ro-

mans. 'But not as the offence, so also is the gift. But where sin abounded, grace hath abounded more.' (v. 15.....20.) Cardinal Hugo thus explains these words: 'The grace of Jesus Christ is more efficacious than sin.' There is no comparison, says the Apostle, between the sin of man, and the gift which God bestowed us, in giving us Jesus Christ. The sin of Adam was great; but much greater has been the grace, which Jesus Christ merited for us by his Passion. 'I have come, that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.' (John x. 10.) I have come into the world, says the Saviour, in order that men who are dead by sin, may receive through me, not only the life of grace, but even a life more abundant than that which they had lost by sin. Hence, the holy church, in the transports of her joy, calls that a happy fault, which merited for us such and so great a Redeemer.

'Behold, God! my Saviour! I will act confidently, and I will not fear.' (Isaias

xxii.) If, then, O my Jesus! you who are a God all powerful, be also my Saviour, what have I to fear? If, during my past life, I have offended you, I repent it from my whole heart. Henceforth I desire to serve you, obey you, and love you. I firmly hope that you, my Redeemer! who have done and suffered so much for my salvation, will not refuse me any of those graces that are necessary for my salvation, says St. Bonaventure.

'You shall draw waters from the fountains of the Saviour: and you will say in that day: Confess ye to the Lord, and invoke his name.' (Isaias xiii. 3.) The wounds of Jesus Christ are happy fountains, from whence we may draw all graces, if we ask them with faith. 'And a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the torrent of thorns.' (Joel iii. 18.) The death of Jesus is this promised fountain, which has inundated our souls with the waters of grace, and which, by its powerful virtues, has changed the

thorns of sin into the flowers and fruits of eternal life. The Redeemer in his love, says St. Paul, was made poor in this world, in order that we might become rich through the merits of his poverty. 'Being rich, he became poor for your sakes, that through his poverty you might be rich.' (2 Cor. viii. 9.) By sin we were ignorant, unjust, wicked, slaves of hell; but Jesus Christ, says the same Apostle, by dying and making atonement for us, 'is made to us wisdom from God, and justice, sanctification, and redemption.' (1 Cor. i. 30.) That is to say, as St. Bernard explains this passage, he is made our wisdom by instructing us; our justice, in forgiving us; our sanctity by his example; and our redemption, by his sufferings. In one word, says St. Paul, the merits of Jesus Christ have enriched us with every blessing, so that nothing now prevents us from deserving graces of every description. 'In all things you are made rich in him, so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace.' (1 Cor. i. 5...7.)

O my Jesus! my Jesus! with what pleasing hopes am I not inspired by your Passion! Tender Master! how much do I not owe you! Oh! if I had never offended you! Pardon me all the injuries which I have committed against you; set me all on fire with your love, and save me for ever. And how can I doubt of obtaining pardon, salvation, and all the graces I stand in need of, from an All-powerful God, who has shed every drop of his blood for me? Ah! my Jesus! my Hope! you were pleased to lose your life, in order that I should not lose mine—God forbid that I should lose you, O infinite good! If I have hitherto lost you, I am sorry for it: No! henceforth I will never abandon you more. It is from yourself I expect assistance, that I may never lose you again. O Lord! I love you, and I desire to love you for ever. Mary! you are my hope, after Jesus; say to your Son, that I am under your protection, and I will be saved. Amen. Amen.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE LOVE WHICH THE ETERNAL FATHER HAS SHEWN US, IN GIVING US HIS SON.

1. 'God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son.' (John iii. 16.) Such was the love of God for the world, says Jesus Christ, that he has given his own, his only Son for it. Three things are to be considered in this gift—the giver, the gift, and the love with which it is bestowed. Now we know that the more exalted the giver is, the more precious is the gift. If a person received a flower from the hands of a monarch, he would esteem it more than a treasure. How greatly then should we not estimate the gift that comes to us from the hand of God? But what is this gift which God bestows us? *His own Son!* The love of the Father was not satisfied in heaping so many blessings on this earth, he would bestow even himself,

in the person of his Incarnate Word. He did not give us a servant, nor an angel, says St. Chrysostom, but his own Son. Thus the holy church cries out, in an ecstacy of admiration: 'O wonderful condescension of thy mercy toward us! O inestimable love of charity! Thou hast delivered up thy Son, in order to redeem a slave.'

O infinite God! how could you treat me with such admirable tenderness! Who can ever comprehend such an excess of love, as that you would give your only Son to redeem a slave. Ah! my God! who are goodness itself, since you have given me the most precious gift you possessed, it is exceedingly just that I should make you the richest offering that I can. You ask me for my love, and I implore you only for your love. Behold my poor heart; I consecrate it entirely to your love. Creatures! whosoever you are, depart from my heart, and give place to my God, who deserves and wishes to possess it entirely, and with-

out a rival. I love you, O God of love! I love you more than all things, and I wish to love nothing but you, my Creator! my Treasure! my All!

2. God has given us his Son, and for what motive? Purely for love. Pilate, through human fear, delivered up Jesus to the Jews. 'He delivered him up to their will.' (Luke xxiii.) But the Eternal Father has given us his Son, on account of the love which he bore us. 'He delivered him up for us all.' St. Thomas says, that love is the first in every gift. When a person presents us with any thing, the first gift we receive is that of the love with which the donor offers his gift; for according to the reflection of the Angelic Doctor, love is the only reason of every gratuitous present; so that when a gift is offered through any other motive but love, it ceases to be a true gift. Now the gift which the Eternal Father presented us in bestowing us his Son, was a real gift, purely gratuitous, and without any merit on our part; hence, it is said, that

the Incarnation of the Word has taken place by the operation of the Holy Ghost, that is, purely by love, as the same Doctor declares.

But it is not only through pure love that God has given us his Son; this love was immense; and this was what Jesus meant, when he said: 'God *so* loved the world.' This word *so*, says St. Chrysostom, signifies the greatness of God's love, in bestowing us this gift. Ah! what greater love could God display towards us, than in condemning his innocent Son to death, to save miserable sinners like us? 'Who did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.' (Rom. viii.) If the Eternal Father had been capable of suffering, what agony would he not have endured, when he saw himself compelled in some manner, by his justice, to condemn that Son whom he loved as himself, to so cruel and ignominious a death? 'And the Lord was pleased to bruise him in infirmity.' (Isaias liii. 10.)

He wished that he should expire in torments and agony.

Imagine then, that you see the Eternal Father holding the departed Jesus in his arms, and saying to us: O Men! this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Behold how I was pleased to treat him for your iniquities. 'For the wickedness of my people have I struck him.' (Isaias liii.) Behold how I have condemned him to die on this cross, in the midst of affliction, and even abandoned by me, who loved him so tenderly. All this have I done, in order to obtain your love.

O infinite goodness! O infinite mercy! O infinite love! O God of my soul! since for my sake you consented to the death of the object that was dearest to your heart, I offer you in my behalf the great sacrifice which your Son has made of himself; and in the name of his merits, I beseech you to grant me the pardon of my sins, your love and the kingdom of heaven. The favors which I beg are great; but the price which

I offer you is still greater. Pardon me, my Father! and save me, for the love of Jesus Christ. If I have hitherto offended you, I repent of it more than of any other evil, and I now esteem and love you more than all other good.

3. O heaven! who could love us to such an excess as this, but a God of infinite love? St. Paul says, 'that God who is rich in mercy, on account of the great love with which he loved us, has enlivened us, through Jesus Christ, when we were dead in sin.' (Ephes. ii. 4.) The Apostle calls the love *too great*, which God displayed, when he enabled mankind to recover, by the death of his Son, that life of grace which they had forfeited by their sins. But no; this love was not too great for a God who is love itself. 'God is love.' (1 John iv. 16.) St. John says, that in sending his Son into the world, to obtain for us, by his death, pardon and eternal life, he wished to make us comprehend to what an extent the love of God could proceed for our sakes.

'By this hath appeared the love of God in us, because God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.' (1 John iv. 9.)

We were dead by sin to the life of grace, and Jesus by his death has restored us to life. We were miserable, hideous and abominable; but God, by means of Jesus Christ, has rendered us beautiful and acceptable in his divine eyes. 'He made us acceptable through his divine Son.' (Ephes. i. 6.) 'He made us acceptable,' that is, 'he rendered us agreeable.' Hence, St. Chrysostom puts this question. If there were a poor leper all covered with ulcers, and all frightful, and that some one should not only heal his leprosy, but also render him beautiful and rich, what gratitude would not this leper feel towards his benefactor? How much more then are we not indebted to God, who, when our souls were disfigured and frightful on account of our sins, not only delivered them from our sins, through Jesus Christ, but also rendered them beauti-

ful and lovely? 'He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly things, in Christ.' (Ephes. i. 3.) Cornelius a Lapide thus comments on this passage: *He has enriched us with every spiritual gift.* To bless on the part of God is to do good. Now, the Eternal Father, in giving us Jesus Christ, has loaded us with benefactions of every kind, not only corporal but spiritual. '*He hath blessed us in heavenly things*,' by giving us, through his Son, a heavenly life in this world, and a heavenly glory in the next.

Bless me then, O God of love! Become my benefactor, and may your gifts attract all my love to you. Grant that the love which you have borne me, may inflame me with love for your goodness. You deserve an infinite love; I love you with all the love I am capable of; I love you more than all other things; I love you more than myself. I surrender you my entire will, and behold the grace which I implore. Make me henceforth live and act in all things com-

formably to your divine will, since you will nothing but my good, and my eternal salvation.

4. 'The king hath brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me.' (Cant. ii. 4.) My Lord, says the sacred Spouse, has brought me into his cellar; that is, he has placed before my eyes, all the benefits he has heaped upon me, in order to gain my love. 'He set in order charity in me.' An author says, that God in order to gain our love, has arrayed against us, if we may use the expression, an army of gifts, the children of his love. But the gift of Jesus Christ was the *chosen arrow* foretold by Isaias, says Cardinal Hugo. 'He hath made me as a chosen arrow; in his quiver he hath hidden me.' (Is. xlix. 2.) Thus, continues the Cardinal, as the hunter reserves the best arrow to inflict the last wound on the fallen beast, so God amongst all his other benefits kept Jesus in reserve, until the time of grace arrived. Then he discharged him as if to in-

flict the last blow, and to wound the hearts of men with love. St. Peter was wounded with this arrow, says St. Chrysostom, when he said to his master, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.' (John xxi.)

Ah! my God! I am encompassed on all sides with these snares of your love. I also love you; and if I love you, I know that you too love me. But who will ever be able to separate me from your love? Sin alone can do it. However, it belongs to you to deliver me through your mercy, from this infernal monster. I would prefer all kinds of evils; the most cruel death, and even annihilation itself, sooner than offend you by mortal sin. But you know my past failings; you know my weakness. Assist me, my God! for the love of Jesus Christ! I am the work of your own hands; you have created me; do not therefore despise me. If I deserve to be forsaken by you, on account of my sins, do I not also deserve to obtain your mercy, through the love of Jesus Christ, who has offered you the

sacrifice of his life in order to save me. I offer you his merits, which entirely belong to me, and through them I ask, and expect from you holy perseverance, and a happy death; and in the mean time, the grace of devoting the remainder of my life to your glory. It is too much to have offended you. I now repent of it from my whole heart, and I desire to love you with all my strength. I am unwilling to resist your love any longer. I give myself to you without reserve. Grant me your grace and your love, and do with me whatsoever you please. My God! I love you, and I ask to love you for ever! Hear me, through the merits of Jesus Christ. Mary, my mother! pray to God for me. Amen. Amen.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE LOVE WHICH THE SON OF GOD DISPLAYED TOWARDS US, IN DESIRING TO DIE FOR US.

1. 'And behold, thy time was the time of lovers,.....and thou wast made exceeding beautiful.' (Ezech. xvi. 8, 13.) How much are not we Christians indebted to the Lord for what he has done for us since the coming of Christ? Our time is no longer a time of fear like that of the Jews, but a time of love, since we have seen a God die for our salvation, and in order to obtain our love. It is of faith, that Jesus has loved us, and delivered himself to death for our love. 'Christ loved us, and delivered himself up for us.' (Ephes. v.) And who could make an all-powerful God die, if he did not of his own accord wish to lay down his life for us? 'I lay down my life.....No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself.' (John x. 17.) St. John also remarks, that it

is by his death Jesus has given us the greatest possible proof of his love. 'Having loved his own, he loved them to the end.' (John iii. 1.) Jesus has given us so great a proof of his love, by his death, says a pious author, that after this he could do nothing more to convince us of his great love for us.

My good Saviour! through love you are entirely mine; and I, through love, give myself entirely to you. For my salvation you have sacrificed your life: and I desire to die for your glory, at whatever time and in whatever manner you please. You could do no more than you have done to gain my love; but I, ungrateful wretch, have betrayed you for nothing. My Jesus! I repent of it from my whole heart. In the name of your sufferings pardon me; and as a token of your forgiveness, grant me the grace of loving you. I feel within me, through your grace, a great desire of loving you, and I form this resolution of becoming entirely yours. But I know my weakness; I know my treasons against you. You

alone can support me, and make me faithful. Assist me, O my love! grant that I may love you, and I ask for nothing more.

2. The blessed Denis the Carthusian says, that the Passion of Jesus Christ was called an *excess*, (Luke ix. 31.) because it was really an excess of mercy and love. O God! what faithful Christian can exist without loving Jesus Christ, if he frequently meditates on his Passion? The wounds of Jesus, says St. Bonaventure, are all wounds of love: these are the darts which wound the most hardened hearts; these are the flames which set the coldest hearts on fire. On a certain day, the blessed Henry Suzin, in order to impress more strongly on his heart the love of his suffering Jesus, took a sharp iron instrument and cut on his breast the name of his tender Master. All bathed in blood he went to the church, and there prostrated before Jesus crucified, he said to him, O Lord! the only love of my soul, behold my desire. I wished to engrave you on the very bottom of my heart, but I could

not. Do you, to whom all things are possible, supply my weakness, and engrave your adorable name on the very bottom of my heart, in such a manner, that neither your name nor your love may be ever effaced.

'My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen amongst thousands.' (Cant. v. 10.) O my Jesus! your perfect innocence renders you of unspotted whiteness; but on this cross you are all red on account of the wounds you have received for my sake. I choose you for the only object of my love. Whom could I love, if not you? What object in the universe could I find so amiable as you, my Redeemer! my God! my All? I love you, O Lord! who are infinitely lovely. I love you more than all things. Grant that I may also love you with the whole force of my love, and without any reserve.

3. 'O! if you but knew the mystery of the cross,' said St. Andrew to the tyrant. O tyrant! he would have said, if you but knew the love which Jesus Christ had for you, when he died on the cross to save

you, you would abandon all earthly goods and expectations! We must say the same thing to the faithful, who believe, it is true, in the Passion of Jesus, but who never reflect on it. Ah! if all men knew the love which Jesus Christ displayed for us, by his death on the cross, who could refuse to love him? The Saviour has died, says the Apostle, in order that he might make himself master of our affections, by the love which he exhibited for us at his death. 'For to this end Christ died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. Therefore whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.' (Rom. xix. 9.) It is just then, that whether we live, or whether we die, we should entirely belong to Jesus, who has saved us at so great a price. O who can cry out as St. Ignatius the martyr did, in these transports of love: May fire, crosses, wild beasts, and all kinds of torment conspire against me, that I may gain the victory, and enjoy Jesus Christ.

O my tender Master! you have died in order to make a conquest of my soul; but what have I done to gain you, O infinite God? Ah! my Jesus! how many times have I lost you for nothing? Miserable wretch, that I was, I knew that I was forfeiting your grace by my sins; I knew that I was causing you grievous displeasure, and yet I continued to do so! What consoles me is, that I have to deal with an infinite goodness, who forgets the crimes of the sinner when he repents, and loves him. Yes, my God! I do repent for my sins, and love you. For pity's sake forgive me, and reign henceforth in a heart that has so long rebelled against you. I confide in you, and I give myself entirely to you. Tell me to do what you please, for I am ready to do it. But, my Lord! I desire to love you, and to please you in all things. Give me strength, and I hope to accomplish my resolution.

4. Jesus did not cease to love us at his death; he still loves us, and seeks after us

with the same love, which he had in coming down from heaven to seek after us, and to die for us. It is well known what a remarkable proof of his love our Saviour gave to St. Francis Xavier, in one of his voyages. In the midst of a storm a wave washed the crucifix of the saint into the sea; when he arrived on shore in sorrow and affliction, Xavier ardently desired to recover the image of his beloved Master; when, behold, he immediately perceived a fish approaching him, which carried the crucifix in his fins. The saint approached, and with tears of tenderness and love, received the holy image, and pressed it feelingly to his heart. Oh! with what love Jesus comes to the souls that seek him! 'The Lord is good .....to the soul that seeketh him.' (Lament. iii.) He is good to the soul that seeks after him with true love. Now, can those persons believe they have true love, who refuse the crosses which the Saviour sends them? 'Christ did not please himself.' (Rom. xv.) Jesus, through love for us, says Cornelius

a Lapide, did not seek for the pleasures of the earth, but for sufferings and death, and this, although he was innocent. And what do we seek through love for Jesus? St. Peter, martyr, being once at his prayers, complained of some injustice that had been done him, and said, what have I done, O Lord! that I should suffer this persecution? Jesus crucified answered him; and what evil have I committed, Peter! that I should be nailed to this cross? O my tender Saviour! you ask what evil you have committed? *You have loved us too much*, since you would suffer so much for the love of us. And shall we, who have by our sins, deserved hell, refuse to accept whatever sufferings you are pleased to send us for our good? My Jesus! you are all love to him that seeks you? I seek neither for your sweets nor your consolations, but, for yourself alone, and for your will. Give me your love, and treat me afterwards as you please. I embrace all the crosses which you will send me, poverty, persecutions, infirmities,

and sorrows. Only deliver me from sin, and let all other evils befall me. Still that will be little, in comparison to all you have suffered for me.

5. 'In order to redeem a slave, the Father has not spared his Son, neither has the Son spared himself,' says St. Bernard. And after so much love for men, can there be any one found who will not love so loving a God? The Apostle writes, that Jesus has died for us all, in order that we should no longer live but for God alone, and for his love. 'Christ has died for all, that they who live may now live not for themselves, but for him who died for them.' (2 Cor.) But, alas! the greater part of men, although God has died for them, live for sin and for the devil, not for Jesus Christ. Plato said, that love is the attraction of love; and Seneca: love, if you wish to be loved. Now, Jesus in dying for men, seems to have become foolish through love for us. 'It seemed foolish,' says St. Gregory, 'that the author of life should die for all men.'

How then does it happen, that after so many prodigies of love he has not been yet able to gain our hearts? How comes it to pass, that after having loved us so much, he has not yet succeeded in making himself loved by us?

Oh! why do not all men love you, my Jesus! who are infinitely amiable! You are a God worthy of infinite love: but my poor Master, (permit me to call you so,) you have done and suffered much to gain the love of men, and where are those who love you? I perceive nearly all mankind loving something else; some, their parents; others, their friends; others, the most unworthy creatures; riches, honors, pleasures; nay, even animals; but how many are there that love you, O infinite loveliness? O God! how few is not the number! But miserable sinner, as I am, I ask to be of this small number. Yes, there was a time when I offended you by loving unworthy objects to the prejudice of your love. But I love and esteem you more than all other goods, and I desire to love nothing but you

alone. Pardon me, my Jesus! and come to my assistance.

6. What, Christians, says St. Cyprian, God is satisfied with you, and you will not be satisfied with your God! Ah! my dearly-beloved Jesus! I do not wish that any other love but yours should exist in me; I am contented with possessing you; I renounce all other affections; I am satisfied with your love. I hear you say to me, 'Place me as a seal upon thy heart.' (Cant. viii.) Yes, my Jesus! crucified for me, I do place you, and I beseech you to place yourself as a seal upon my heart, that it may be firmly closed against every affection but yours. Heretofore I have grieved you by surrendering my heart to a strange love; but the only thing that afflicts me this day, is the remembrance of having forfeited your love by my sins. But for the future, who shall separate me from your love? 'Who shall separate me from the charity of Christ?'

No, O most amiable of Masters! since you have made me comprehend the love

that you bore me, I can no longer live without loving you. I love you, O my crucified love! I love you with my whole heart, and I offer you this soul that has been so much sought after and loved by you. Ah! through the merits of that death which so painfully separate your holy soul from your body, wean my heart from every attachment which would prevent me from being all yours, and from loving you with my whole heart. Mary, my hope! assist me, that I may love nothing but your divine Son, so that I may be able to say with truth, for the remainder of my life, My Love has been crucified! My Love has been crucified! Amen.

PRAYER OF ST. BONAVENTURE.

O Jesus! who through love for me did not spare yourself; imprint your passion upon my heart, so that in all places I may have your wounds before my eyes, and may find no repose nor consolation but in you, and in the meditation of your sufferings. Amen.

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